



LITTLE VILLAGE

IOWA CITY'S NEWS & CULTURE MAGAZINE

VOL. 15 | ISSUE 150
MARCH 5 - 18



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Exuberant Politics Opening Reception @ Legion Arts

Friday March 7th, 6-8pm Iowa City, IA
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Friday March 7th, 7:00-8:00pm West Branch, IA
@ West Branch Public Library

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Farmer's Market @ Ely Public Library

Saturday March 15th, 10:00am-2:00pm Cedar Rapids, IA
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Illustration by Jarrett Mitchell

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HELPING OUT

In one neighborhood, an attempt to save a sparrow shows that it takes a village to overcome winter. • **BY THOMAS DEAN**



One of the good things (yes, I said good things) about the dramatic winter we've lived through is a strengthened sense of community that has arisen from this polar vortex. When adversity strikes, people help each other. If there's overnight snowfall, our next-door neighbor, Steve Spangler, who has the only snow-blower in the proximity of several houses, kindly clears a path on the sidewalks of two or three neighbors, including ours. (Thanks, Steve.) Recently, when the temperature actually climbed into the 40s and rapid snowmelt flooded our street, my wife Susan and I waded through water to dig out at least some part of our plowed-over neighborhood storm drains.

Winter neighborliness extends to the least among us as well. During record-breaking seasons like this one, food is scarce for the wild

creatures who share our place. Birds need to eat constantly to maintain their 106-degree body temperature—fluffing out their feathers is not enough to keep them alive. Susan regularly puts out seed near the stoop, and we end up with a small colony in our evergreen bushes in front of the house.

One day, a sparrow that was either confused, had an accident or was so desperate for food that he went looking for it anywhere, became trapped in our hollow metal basketball hoop pole. My daughter, Sylvia, was shoveling the driveway at dinner time after one of our many snowfalls. I stepped outside, and she said, "Is there something alive in there?" Sure enough, we heard skittering sounds coming from the pole.

Sylvia went and got Susan and my son, Nathaniel. Susan grabbed a flashlight and

pulled out our 8-foot ladder. From its top, she shined the beam down the hollow pole where she saw the sparrow trapped inside.

We were planning to get rid of this old monstrosity of a pole when the weather warmed up, a process that would involve digging around the cement the pole was set in. It was getting dark, was below 20 degrees, the ground was frozen and snow was piled up against the pole: We weren't about to dig it out.

I figured that "simply" cutting the pole down in order to release the sparrow was our only option. But I wasn't sure how we would manage that. The kids grabbed a couple of hacksaws and started making very slow headway, but hand sawing wasn't going to do the trick. Meanwhile, I rummaged around in our basement workshop, looking at what power saws and blades we had, but nothing was appropriate for slicing through a metal pole.

Changing Futures.

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In the meantime, Susan called our neighbor, Bob Richardson, who has all manner of nifty tools. He was actually at another neighbor's house and about to leave for dinner out, but within a few minutes, Bob was in our driveway with something small, circular and sharp (it was dark by then, and I never got a close look at what he had brought). In a matter-of-fact way Bob said, "There might be a few sparks," and immediately our front driveway lit up with a shower of flowing gold that would have put an exploding box of Fourth of July sparklers to shame.

In just a few minutes Bob had cut through enough that we could tip the pole. To our dismay, the bottom of the pole was also filled with cement, and Bob had been cutting through that as well. In the meantime, Susan had fetched a box to hold the bird in case it was injured—I have lost count of the number of birds we have dispatched to bird rehabbers. She shined the flashlight down the long, dark tunnel, and Mr. Sparrow was still in there, clearly frightened.

The pole was not all the way tipped yet, so the kids and I all grabbed onto it and lowered it

downwards. Within a second or two, the sparrow fluttered out of his tiny circular prison, no doubt relieved to escape even though it was back in the frigid Iowa winter night.

All told, we probably spent an hour on this little adventure. I realize that many birds will likely not survive this winter, and in the grand scheme of things, our efforts to save one sparrow were disproportionate to the suffering of many flocks. But we encountered a creature in distress, and no matter how small it may have been to us, its life was everything to it. The biggest kudos go to Bob Richardson for answering the call of his crazy neighbors, even as he was about to enjoy a nice dinner with friends. That's what being a neighbor is all about.

Winter can bring about the best of community—when people band together for the greater good, to make stories that mark our days. **lv**

Thomas Dean will remember the winter of 2014 for the bird in the basketball hoop pole.

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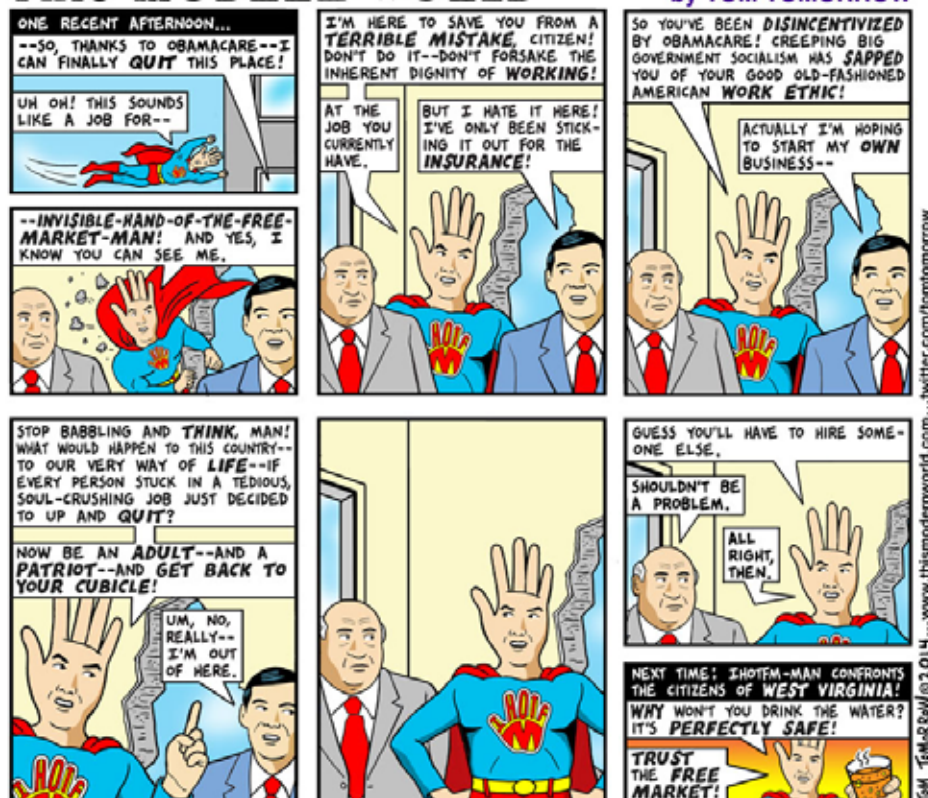


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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



ONE RECENT AFTERNOON...
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UH OH! THIS SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR--
--INVISIBLE-HAND-OF-THE-FREE-MARKET-MAN: AND YES, I KNOW YOU CAN SEE ME.
I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU FROM A TERRIBLE MISTAKE, CITIZEN! DON'T DO IT--DON'T FORSAKE THE INHERENT DIGNITY OF WORKING!
AT THE JOB YOU CURRENTLY HAVE.
BUT I HATE IT HERE! I'VE ONLY BEEN STICKING IT OUT FOR THE INSURANCE!
SO YOU'VE BEEN DISINCULTURIZED BY OBAMACARE! CREEPING BIG GOVERNMENT SOCIALISM HAS SAPPED YOU OF YOUR GOOD OLD-FASHIONED AMERICAN WORK ETHIC!
ACTUALLY I'M HOPING TO START MY OWN BUSINESS--
STOP BABBLING AND THINK, MAN! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THIS COUNTRY--TO OUR VERY WAY OF LIFE--IF EVERY PERSON STUCK IN A TEDIOUS, SOUL-CRUSHING JOB JUST DECIDED TO UP AND QUIT?
NOW BE AN ADULT--AND A PATRIOT--AND GET BACK TO YOUR CUBICLE!
UM, NO, REALLY--I'M OUT OF HERE.
GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO HIRE SOMEONE ELSE.
SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
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MORNING MUNCHIES

Homemade doughnuts are the perfect cold-weather breakfast treat.
BY FRANKIE SCHNECKLOTH



Sunday is the best day to tackle a crazy recipe, right? I love a good doughnut and I have wanted to attempt a batch at home for some time. When I finally decided to give making homemade doughnuts a go, I looked at a few different recipes to get a good idea of the basic ingredients I needed, most of which I already had in my kitchen. With nothing better to do on a late winter morning, I decided to try my hand at homemade doughnuts. Here's a recipe to make delicious, fresh doughnuts at home. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS FOR CAKE DOUGHNUTS:

- 1 CUP SUGAR
- 4 TEASPOONS BAKING POWDER
- 1 1/2 TEASPOONS SALT
- 1/2 TEASPOON NUTMEG (OPTIONAL)
- 2 EGGS
- 1 CUP MILK

PIECE OF CAKE

Make fresh fried doughnuts in no time.

Photo by Frankie Schneckloth

- 1/4 CUP UNSALTED BUTTER, MELTED
- 4 CUPS FLOUR (PLUS A LITTLE MORE IF NECESSARY)
- NEUTRAL OIL (FOR FRYING)

STEP 1: In a large bowl, mix the first four dry ingredients: sugar, baking powder, salt and nutmeg.

STEP 2: Add eggs, milk and melted butter that has cooled slightly. Beat until all butter is incorporated.

STEP 3: Add the flour to the egg and sugar mixture one cup at a time and beat until combined. The dough is ready when it's soft and sticky, yet firm enough to handle.

STEP 4: Cover and chill dough for at least one hour.

STEP 5: Remove your dough from the fridge and begin heating about one inch of oil in a saucepan to 360 °F. Please note: You might not think checking the temperature of your oil matters, but it does. If your oil is not hot enough, your doughnuts become greasy. If the oil is too hot, you crisp up the outside quickly while potentially not cooking the inside completely. Just get a candy thermometer. A skillet can also be used for frying, but I prefer using a saucepan so the oil doesn't splatter everywhere and make a big mess in my kitchen.

STEP 6: Roll half the dough out on a floured surface to about 1/2-inch thickness. Repeat with the second half. Then, to make doughnut holes, use a knife and a small circle cutter to cut sections of dough into little balls.

STEP 7: When the oil reaches 360 °F, begin gently dropping the dough into the saucepan in batches. After about a minute, use a slotted metal spoon to flip the doughnuts over and fry the other side for a minute or so until they are lovely golden brown confections.

STEP 8: Remove doughnuts from saucepan and set them on a wire rack covered with paper towels to soak up excess grease. Repeat frying with the rest of the dough.

STEP 9: When the doughnuts have cooled, top them with icing, chocolate, sprinkles or sugar. For this batch I chose to make two glazes—a Maple Bourbon Glaze with Bacon Bits and an Almond Lemon Glaze with Pistachios. **IV**

Frankie Schneckloth loves a good doughnut.
(Recipe adapted from *Joy of Cooking*.)



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BREW OF THE MONTH: MARCH

FROST LINE RYE

Summit Brewing Company | St. Paul, Minn.

Just as March is stuck between seasons, the beer of the month, Summit's Frost Line Rye, is a seasonal between seasonals. Offering spice and malt alongside an invigorating and energizing tease of citrus, Frost Line Rye befits a month when temperatures rise and the days lengthen but the snow still flies, the trees are still bare and, sadly, my camping gear remains stored and unused on most weekends. (If the weather is right, though, I'll be cracking beers around a campfire.)

Though Summit recommends serving Frost Line Rye in a "stemmed tulip glass," a good ol' shaker pint glass will work just as well. The color is deep, copper-tinted amber, and a couple fingers of tight, light tan head will dissipate slowly and leave trails of lacing along the glass. Overall, the aroma is bready—at times reminding me of pumpernickel. The first whiff is a joyful and enticing blend of malts and spice: Aromas of chocolate, caramel, toffee and toasted malts create a solid foundation for a generous dose of spicy rye. Orange and grapefruit citrus slowly gain prominence and are welcome reminders that springtime pale ales and IPAs are just around the corner.

The flavor is delicious and true to Summit's "between seasons' seasonal" billing. While toasted malts, chocolate, toffee and caramel are noticeable, the namesake rye flavor takes center stage. It offers an assertive dose of spice and bitterness that pleases throughout each sip and continues in the aftertaste. The orange and grapefruit citrus flavors may not be bracing, but, coupled with a little pine resin, they give the beer a tasty West Coast-style zing. **lv**

SERVING TEMPERATURE: Summit recommends serving Frost Line Rye at 44-48 °F.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 5.8 percent ABV.

FOOD PAIRINGS: According to the Summit website, Frost Line Rye pairs well with spicier foods like "jerk chicken and pork, south Indian curry, [and] pepper jack cheese."

WHERE TO BUY: Summit brews are widely available around town and Frost Line Rye should be among the selection.

PRICE: \$7.50–\$8 per six-pack.

Casey Wagner lives in Iowa City.



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REVELRY ON REPEAT

Relive Mission Creek 2012 as captured through the lens of Iowa City photographer Bill Adams. Select images from last year's festova; will be on display at Motley Cow Cafe beginning in late March. | Pictured: An unannounced set by Mucca Pazza on the Ped Mall.

ARTIST OF HER OWN INVENTION

In anticipation of her April 1 visit to Iowa City, Laurie Anderson talks to *Little Village* about her early experiments and run-ins with the art police.
BY KEMBREW MCLEOD

Laurie Anderson isn't solely responsible for me turning out a little bit weird, but she still played a significant role in skewing my worldview. I stumbled across her *Big Science* album not long after it was released, when I was an impressionable young teenager. This 1982 record contains her unlikely hit single "O Superman (For Massenet)," which opened my eyes to a new world of performance art and left-of-center music. Years later, when I recently got my first chance to speak with Anderson, the last thing I expected was to be making small talk with her about the weather.

"I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S HAPPENED TO YOU IN CONVERSATIONS, BUT YOU SUDDENLY BECOME AWARE OF YOUR VOICE AND ITS PRETENTIOUS ELEMENTS [LAUGHS]. YOU HEAR THIS VOICE DRONING ON IN A PRETENTIOUS WAY AND YOU REALIZE, 'THAT'S ME!'"—LAURIE ANDERSON

"How was your winter, by the way?" she asks before I start asking questions. "Terrible, it's been terrible," I grumble, adding politely, "How was your winter?" In her familiar conversational tone, Anderson replies, "It's really extreme. Personally, I love it. I'm from Illinois, and I love winters like this. It's been like our seventh major snow storm." This comment prompts me to grumble some more about shoveling snow. "I think it's just beautiful," she continues. "I was missing weather so much. It's just such a great pleasure to see it and all the beautiful snow."

At that moment, I felt like I had been transported into one of Laurie Anderson's performance monologues. For decades, she has been telling stories and making observations about life in America—from the very mundane to the drop-dead serious. She first shook up the worlds of art, music and pop culture with her ambitious, extended performance piece *United States I–IV*, which debuted in 1983 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. This was followed by her 1986 concert film *Home of the Brave*, which offered a similarly iconoclastic vision of America.

On April 1, Anderson will grace the stage of

the Englert to talk about some of her new projects. "I'm making a film for Arte TV France," she tells me, "and they said, 'Can you make a film about your philosophy of life?' And I said, 'I don't have a philosophy of life, and if I did, I wouldn't try to foist it off onto anyone in the form of a film.' So, anyway, we shot quite a bit of it, and it's expanded into several other realms, so it's very exciting."

Anderson's explanation is a bit cryptic, so I ask her if she has a nutshell summary. "It's a film about my dog," comes the unlikely answer. "One of the subplots is actually surveillance and cameras. The ways that the two worlds of machines and animals come together is what it's really about." I then end up even more confused, but in a good way. What strikes me about Anderson during our conversation is her utter lack of pretension, even when her thinking veers into more abstract areas. She stays grounded with a mixture of wonder, mischief and humor.

Not only is Laurie Anderson an artist, performer, storyteller and musician, she is also an inventor. Over the years, she has modified her violins in a variety of ways—from attaching a turntable to the instrument in the 1970s, to the digital violin Anderson created in the 1980s—which allowed her to trigger samples with a bow. What motivates her to create these things? "Fun. Just tinkering," she says. "It's the same motivation when I always make something new—which is to make something new, for the thrill of it."

"I used to do that as a kid," she continues. "One of my hobbies as a child was to sit around in my fort out in the woods and think of things that never happened before. I don't know why this was so interesting to me [laughs], but it was intensely interesting and important at that time. I'm not sure what the motivation was other than the excitement of discovery."

So, I ask, is inventing like making art or is it different? "Kind of the same," Anderson says. "Now I'm working on a fountain with a zoetrope viewer, so when you look through the viewer all the water is going backwards. That's kind of like a science fair project in a lot of ways [laughs]. But it's also a really beautiful image. So I try not to worry so much about the difference between a science fair project and an art project."

Was it the thrill of discovery that moved her to experiment with voice-altering technologies, like the vocoder Anderson used on "O Superman"? "Well, it was actually to have another way to tell a story," she tells me. "To be able to have another point of view, which I find is very valuable when trying to tell a story."

"I don't know if it's happened to you in conversations, but you suddenly become aware of your voice and its pretentious elements [laughs]. You hear this voice droning on in a pretentious way and you realize, 'THAT'S ME!' [laughs] So I think it's important to distance yourself from things. As a writer, I think it's valuable to have a few points of view."

We begin to talk about her new visual art—a series of large-scale drawings—which is a departure from the sorts of projects she is most known for. I wonder what has pushed her, over the past five decades, to work within such a wide variety of mediums and contexts. "Pleasure," she says. "The pleasure of making things."

"Sometimes the art world and the music world are about trying to define people's work very narrowly. For example, I'm known as this cool, um, multimedia artist. So when I do these big drawings with charcoal, you realize, 'Uh oh, here come the art police!' And they're blowing their whistles—whiiiiirrrr! 'What are you doing, making those drawings?' And I'm like, 'Well, I wanted to be an artist because it's the most free thing I can do.' But it's actually one of the most restrictive, in terms of the way the art world works."

This reminds me of the time I interviewed Yoko Ono, who told me something similar. Even the avant-garde world, Yoko noted, had certain rules: You can't do this or that. "Strict rules," Anderson exclaims, agreeing. "Strict ones!" If the art police do come calling, I'm sure Laurie Anderson will be able to evade arrest with her head-spinning mental jujitsu. **lv**

Kembrew McLeod's new book, Pranksters: Making Mischief in the Modern World, will be published by NYU Press on April 1.

LAURIE ANDERSON LECTURE

April 1 | Englert Theatre | 7:30 p.m. | Free
Illustration by Adam Burke





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SKIN IS IN

On HBO's *Girls*, Lena Dunham's naked body gives audiences a body image reality check. • BY MELISSA ZIMDARS



Since its debut on HBO in the spring of 2012, *Girls* has polarized viewers. Some consider it to be a refreshing and humorous portrayal of less-than-likable female characters, while others critique the show for its lack of diversity or being celebratory of selfishness and entitlement. Regardless of all these potential problems or triumphs, *Girls* is meaningful to me mainly for one reason: Lena Dunham's naked body. Although her character, Hannah Horvath, complains in the first season's final episode, "I am 13 pounds overweight and it has been awful for me my whole life," Dunham displays a body confidence rarely seen on television.

While news reports incessantly detail our ever-expanding waistlines, television depictions show us something else. According to media researchers, about 75 percent of women on our flickering screens can be categorized as being of below average weight. Thinness is undoubtedly idealized not only in magazines, films and television shows, but also on thinspiration Tumblrs and across "thigh gap"

LOOKING BEYOND THE STEREOTYPES

Girls has many flaws, but Hannah's body isn't one.
Illustration by Adam Burke

Instagrams. Our bodies are positioned as perpetual works in progress, and our worth is too often connected to not having a "muffin top" or numbers on a scale.

This social pressure to be small is often blamed on the monotonous television depictions of waifish women. Just like the way television researchers try to determine how viewers are affected by violent images, pornography or stereotypes, they also try to establish the impact of beauty and weight idealizations. In fact, some of them argue that televised images negatively affect perceptions of our own bodies, lower our self-esteems and screw up our relationships with food. While I don't think that a direct, causal relationship can be established between what we see and how we think and act, I do believe television to be a powerful social influence that reinforces body

type hierarchies—namely that some bodies are more beautiful and desirable than others. And this is precisely why Dunham's embrace of her own not-so-socially-idealized body, and all of the surrounding discussions, are so important.

For me, seeing Hannah Horvath/Lena Dunham in the nude produces a productive discomfort. As much as I support body positivity and fat acceptance, I still struggle with my own insecurities. When Hannah eats a cupcake in the bathtub, disrobes before having sex, wears a see-through mesh tank top during a coke-fueled night of partying or plays ping pong in the buff, I often find myself guiltily scrutinizing and judging her thighs, stomach and breasts. At the same time, it is pleasurable and empowering to witness someone appear nude so regularly and so nonchalantly. The more I've watched *Girls*, the more I've realized that my feelings of discomfort in seeing Dunham's naked body aren't resulting from being repulsed by what I am seeing (in fact, I quite like it!), but rather from my own lingering anxiety over the way others might see me. It forces me to confront my own relationship with my body, and reminds me to accept for myself the body love that I preach to others.

Of course not everyone has the same reaction to Dunham's nudity. Some may be appalled or disgusted by her, some may find it titillating and I'm sure others won't even think twice about it. Regardless of all the possible reactions, it cannot be denied that Dunham's

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exhibitionism resists the kinds of beauty and weight standards, and accompanying “rules” for “acceptable” behavior, that television has been so good at reinforcing over the years. Hannah donning a green bikini for almost the entire “Beach House” (Feb. 16) episode resonates with messages circulating in the body acceptance blogosphere. There, women are encouraged to fearlessly wear their “fatkinis” as opposed to fretting over getting their bodies “bikini ready.” Even if Hannah’s own bodily embrace does not yet resonate with the lived experiences of many women, it at least contributes to a space welcoming of self-acceptance, and maybe even self-love.

Unfortunately, a few nude scenes do not make a body revolution. The mere fact that Dunham is asked so much about Hannah’s nudity suggests that we have a long way to go in acknowledging the worth of all bodies. A blog post on *Marie Claire*’s website shortly after *Mike and Molly*’s debut exemplifies how far we are from body acceptance: “I think I’d be grossed out if I had to watch two characters with rolls and rolls of fat kissing each other ... because I’d be grossed out if I had to watch them doing anything.” Needless to say, a nude scene featuring Melissa McCarthy on *Mike and Molly*, or Rebel Wilson on *Super Fun Night*, would likely, and unfortunately, inspire a debate I really don’t want to witness.

There are plenty of reasons to dislike *Girls*, Lena Dunham or the character Hannah Horvath (she is, after all, self-centered, privileged and rather whiny), but her nude body is not a legitimate one. **lv**

When Melissa Zimdars isn’t watching or writing about television, she co-hosts a radio show on KRUI called The Fuzz Fix.



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GENERATION SHAPESHIFT

Writer G. Willow Wilson discusses her vision for the new Ms. Marvel—a Pakistani-American teenager living in Jersey City. • BY ROB CLINE



“I’ve always had a hard time seeing hard and fast boundaries,” G. Willow Wilson told me during a phone conversation about her career. We were talking about the porosity of realms of reality in much of her work, but her comment also applies to her success as a “professional genre-bender,” as she calls herself on her website (gwillowwilson.com).

Wilson, 31, has a rich and varied collection of work to her credit. A convert to Islam, Wilson spent the years immediately following her graduation from Boston University in Cairo, Egypt. While there, she contributed to American publications like *The Atlantic* and *The New York Times Magazine*, as well as the Egyptian weekly *Cairo Magazine*. She was the first Western journalist to interview Ali Gomaa after he became Egypt’s Grand Mufti; the powerful religious leader was so impressed with her work that he invited her for a second conversation.

Her experiences in Egypt are the subject of her lovely and thought-provoking 2010 memoir, *The Butterfly Mosque*, in which her personal story intersects with global issues, including what she calls the ongoing “clash of civilizations” that prevents accord between her culture of origin and that of her second home. Some boundaries appear impenetrable, but Wilson herself—an American and a Muslim—enacts life daily in a manner that refuses to accept that notion.

In her novel, *Alif the Unseen*, which garnered the 2013 World Fantasy Award, Wilson brilliantly blends modern day technology

THE NEW MS. MARVEL

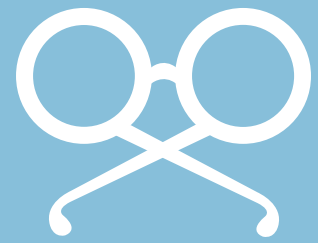
Pakistani-American, Kamala Khan kicks ass.

Photo courtesy of Marvel.

(the protagonist is a hacktivist) and ancient mythmaking to create a fast-paced adventure in which the seen and the unseen choose sides and battle for the soul of an unnamed Arab territory. It is a novel of both action and ideas. Wilson’s concept for how old, layered stories might inform modern day computing and social change is breathtaking. She also has much to say about belief, clashing cultures and the nature of fiction itself.

Her work in comics has been equally layered. Her first graphic novel, 2007’s *Cairo*, with art by M.K. Perker, features a collection of characters with conflicting backgrounds and beliefs who must come together (with the help of a jinn) to defeat an evil gangster/magician. In Wilson and Perker’s Eisner-nominated series *Air* (2009-2010), a young woman with supernatural powers of flight must untangle a complicated skein in which loyalties, motivations and the nature of reality are all open to interpretation. In the DC mini-series *Vixen: Return of the Lion* (2010), Wilson reimagined a key moment in the life of a Justice Leaguer, and she earned another Eisner nomination for her work on Marvel Comics’ *Mystic: The Tenth Apprentice* (2011).

This combination of storytelling experience and personal understanding of issues surrounding Islam in the United States—as well as the complicated nature of personal



BOOK PLUG



In February, B.J. Novak made his literary fiction debut with *One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories*, a collection of 64 darkly comic vignettes. Novak is most well known for his work as a writer, actor and producer of NBC’s *The Office*.

His comedy writing chops shine bright as short fiction. *One More Thing* shares much in common with the humorously absurdist writing of George Saunders and early David Sedaris. Novak’s stories are terribly clever, often prompting the reader to smirk in an “I see what you did there” fashion.

One story follows the inventor of a roller coaster, a ride he wishes to name Life, who is watching a focus group react to the ride they just tested. Novak cunningly weaves together cliché about how life is a roller coaster, only to have respondents throw a wrench into the inventor’s beautiful plans.

His stories are emotionally clever, too. Take, for example, the guy who explains to the world how hurt he is to be known as the guy who returns the first sentient robot to the manufacturer because all he ever wanted was a sex robot and this robot started to cry on him.

Novak’s first book is inventive and highly recommended.

—Melody Dvorak

identity—made her a perfect choice to join the team when Marvel Comics editors Sana Amanat (herself a Muslim-American) and Steve Wacker had an idea for Ms. Marvel.

In the Marvel universe, Carol Danvers, the longtime Ms. Marvel, is now Captain Marvel and the lead character in an outstanding ongoing series written by Kelly Sue DeConnick. That left a spot on the Marvel roster for a new Ms. Marvel. Enter Kamala Khan, a Muslim Pakistani-American teenager living in Jersey City, whose burgeoning powers include the ability to change shape.

I asked Wilson if she anticipated that *Ms. Marvel*, the first issue of which was released in February, would serve as a vehicle for some of the larger themes found in much of her other work. She suggested instead that what makes the project interesting to her is its focus on a second-generation member of an immigrant family.

"(KAMALA'S) JOURNEY IS ABOUT COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE ALL OF THE TIME, AND THAT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO."—**G. WILLOW WILSON**

After talking with many children of immigrants, Wilson discovered that people like Kamala feel as though they are "a little bit of an outsider no matter where they are." The fact that they may speak a different language at home or may bring different kinds of food for lunch highlights these differences. This may lead them to wonder if their true identity is elsewhere.

"They think the missing piece of their identity must be in the mother country," Wilson said, "but when they go there, they're the American."

The strategy for dealing with this sense of disconnection? Turn it inside out.

"Rather than seeing themselves as outsiders," Wilson explained, "they see themselves as insiders wherever they go. It's American innovation at work."

Wilson herself is familiar with these feelings. "When I'm in the United States, I'm in the ethnic majority, but a religious minority. When I'm in Egypt, I'm in the religious majority, but the ethnic minority." For Wilson, this dichotomy is part of her adult experience,

COMICS >> CONT. ON P. 36

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LIMBER LINES

Workshop grad and author, Angela Pelster, discusses her new collection of essays, which will be released in conjunction with her reading at Mission Creek's lit fest. • BY ALEA ADIGWEME



Angela Pelster is the author of *Limber*, a collection of essays that explores the history of her home, Canada, as well as sustainability, justice, the margins and trees. The winner of a Golden Eagle Children's Choice award, Pelster is a 2012 graduate of UI's Nonfiction Writing Program—where we were colleagues—and an assistant professor of English at Towson University in Baltimore. Pelster returns to Iowa City on April 3 to read at Mission Creek Festival, where her book will be released during Sarabande Books' 20th Anniversary reading at Prairie Lights. She took some time to answer a few questions about *Limber* and the themes that it touches on, including violence, love and her relationship with religion.

LITTLE VILLAGE: "What leaves should I twist in my hair to keep safe?," the narrator asks in "Ethan Lockwood," *Limber's* fourth essay. More indirectly expressed variations of that question hover around the book from the very first page of "Les Oiseaux"—a menacingly-titled, page-and-a-half-long overture that introduces almost all of the work's major themes: the cyclical essence of existence, sustainable consumption, [human] nature and violence against women and girls ... At what point in your drafting of *Limber* did you write "Les Oiseaux"? Did you realize toward the end of the process that you needed an essay to serve this purpose or was its creation more of a happy accident?

ANGELA PELSTER: I wrote a version of "Les

MOTHER NATURE

Limber explores the parallel experiences of families and nature. | Photo by Adam Burke

Oiseaux" years before I began working on *Limber*. The experience of watching a flock of cedar waxwings raid the backyard one winter afternoon, while also seeming to be responsible for changing the radio station, was something I wanted to record. But the first version of the essay was softer and didn't include the part about the murdered girl—it was more of a strict meditation on the strangeness of the world. After I wrote the last essay in *Limber* (which came quite late in the process), I realized that I wanted to bookend the collection with short pieces that allowed for violence and magic to coexist. And then I remembered "Les Oiseaux." It was strange to return to something I'd written so many years before and realize that I had, in essence, been working on these ideas long before I realized what they would become.

LV: In that same essay, the narrator acknowledges the limits of her understanding of the natural world, while also asserting that those very limits leave space for everything from the miraculously sublime to the terribly horrific to occur. *Limber* seems concerned with space—its internal and external contours, its properties, who thinks they can own it, etc.—and that concern seems inextricably tied to its conception and embodiment of faith. I feel like there's something radical—still!—about a female-identified narrator choosing to

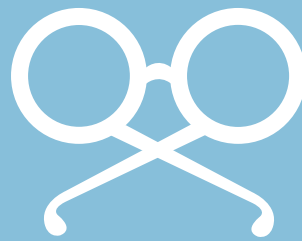
"cherry-pick" her faith in an effort that seems to be, for her, "the most responsible way to live out a faith."

AP: I have a pretty complicated relationship with the Christian church. I suspect that if there were some kind of written test about what we believed before entering, I wouldn't be asked to join the club. I'm alright with that. I was raised in the church, and despite the grief it sometimes brings, that is still the way I choose to interpret the force that put me here ...

I think it would help a lot of us out if Christian churches stopped preaching sermons on Sunday mornings and instead offered history lessons. We live within such a small piece of time, a dot on the long story of the evolution of faith, and mostly, we know nothing. We are guessing at the ways in which God moves in the world and how best to live that out. We are selfish and blind and power-hungry, and so, sometimes we have gotten things very wrong—First Nations residential schools, marriage equality, women's rights, etc.

But the takeaway for me in the story of Christianity is love. Everything rests on love—of self, of others, all creatures, the planet—and it seems reasonable and responsible that when the institution that I associate with acts out of step with love, then it's my job to reject that ... When I was younger, I was afraid that I was being arrogant when I stood in opposition to what the majority was teaching, but there came a point when I realized that if I was going to be wrong about something, I'd rather be wrong about love than hate. And that was incredibly freeing and exciting and faith-sustaining.

LV: *Limber* devotes a lot of space to thinking about the ways in which human beings—as white colonialist settlers, as capitalist energy companies, as parents, as predators, as corporeal extensions of systems of structural oppression—consistently harm each other and this planet. One of the first questions I jotted down on my first reading of the text, when I got to page six, was "How does one protect women and girls in a world that is mind-bogglingly dangerous, in all sorts of ways from micro-aggressive to fatal, while still giving



them the space to grow and be fearless and strong?"

AP: In many ways this is a lot of what drove my writing of *Limber*—though I didn't phrase it as how to protect, but how to exist in a world of such violence. I still don't know the answer to it, probably because I'm not sure there is such a thing as protecting. Protecting seems connected to hope, and I wanted to try to stay away from the idea of hope in the book, because I do not know that there is hope for humanity on a large scale, only at the individual level, and that is where I wanted to write. As a species, we seem destined for self-extinction. And yet life is still heart-breakingly gorgeous. How can this be? How can we bear it?

LV: Mothers and mothering—which could, more broadly, be described as "care-taking"—form the core of the relationships described in *Limber*, with the nurturing and dissolution of families mirroring the same (mis)treatment of nature. I really appreciated that there are no saints in *Limber*, that being a mother is shown to not automatically elevate women into self-sacrificing saints. Everything and everyone

has the capacity for revisionism and fallibility ...

AP: I am drawn to imperfection and inconsistencies and the elevation of the broken. If there actually is any hope to be found, I think it might be in that. One of the essays in *Limber* is about the evolution of trees from the first algae life forms into what they are now. What amazed me the most as I did the research, was the way in which the essence of evolution seemed to take on a personality—like a kid wanting to find out what happens if you do this to that. Trees as they are now, are not an end point, they are not the glorious conclusion of what they were meant to be, they are just this moment's version of what a tree is. In 100 million years, they will be something else. It is inevitable. **lv**

To read the rest of Angela Pelster's interview, visit LittleVillageMag.com. More information on Mission Creek's literary lineup can be found at missionfreak.com.

Alea Adigweme is a freelance writer, artist, and educator based in Iowa city.

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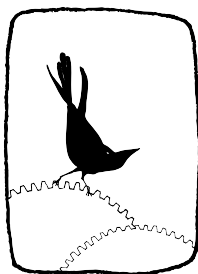
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THINKING OUTSIDE THE (WHITE) BOX

In the Iowa City art market, local galleries get creative.
BY BRIAN PRUGH

There's nothing like going for an afternoon walk and seeing half a dozen art shows within a few short city blocks. To do this in a city like Chicago or New York is a true delight: Galleries sit cheek-by-jowl in tightly knit neighborhoods, and one stroll can wind through engaging and disparate worlds created in each gallery space.

While big cities rely on big spenders to support neighborhoods full of galleries devoted exclusively to showing (and selling) art, venues that show art in Iowa City must either rely on smaller purchases or another income stream altogether. For instance, venues like the Cafe at Prairie Lights, White Rabbit and the Douglas and Linda Paul Gallery at the Englert make their money selling other things: coffee, clothing and concert tickets. While the work there is often engaging, it takes a back seat to the primary source of income.

At Prairie Lights, a cup of coffee is a small price to pay for the chance to get up close and personal with a substantive work of art, but the work is difficult to see when visiting. When I tried to get a look at a work by T. L. Solien from the recent show, *Sconnies*, depicting Captain Ahab's wife in the desert, a patron seated in front of the painting made it difficult to get close enough to examine the material of the thing. Still, I was struck by the loneliness of the visage staring out from that tableau. Camera in hand, Mrs. Ahab braces herself against the vastness of the landscape—she is out to make something of it.

The program at the Englert revolves around Iowa City-based artists, and they most recently hosted a show by UI Senior Z. G. Phelps. This show had its limitations—but there were moments of real promise as well. I found the work done in pencil, *Full Flux*, to be more compelling than the rest: It has an internal energy—as if it were the generative source for the imagery in the other ink and paint works—and its material handling was as fresh and considered as anything else in the show.

The work at White Rabbit lives high on the walls—making use of the tall ceilings of the store to display visual work above the racks of clothes and other merchandise. The visual art program here is uneven, although the aesthetic of the works is consistent with the character of

the store. I find Josh Doster's heads on display in the back half of the gallery, which I have written about in the *Iowa City Arts Review*, to be really outstanding. Doster is a friend and colleague, but those heads, which I have watched evolve over the past three years, are the most compelling work I encountered on my walkabout.

The remaining stops on my walk were the two commercial galleries that are regularly open, and there are several things to note: While there is a base of collectors here, and there is an economy for art here, there just isn't the same kind of money flowing through the Iowa City art market as there is in larger cities. This means that the financial support for real estate dedicated exclusively to showing art is harder to come by, and that galleries survive on more sales of smaller, less expensive works of art.

Nowhere is this more clear than in the Chait Galleries Downtown. This space has been a struggle for me and I don't feel comfortable in it. When I stopped in the other day, the attendant asked if I was there to see the show, which I was—but I could not find the show, entitled *Benjamin's Buttons*, amongst the proliferation of other objects in the space. It was pointed out to me that it occupied one wall at the left of the entrance, and once I got looking at those canvases and drawings, there were things to see. A small drawing by Jon Pearson, *The Pumpitup Kid In Line*, and a rather lumpy painting of the power plant downtown by Rob Dietrich were both fun paintings—playful with materials and moving in content. They were unfortunately accompanied by a “tweet”—part of the submission process for the juried show—that is a good reminder that artists should edit their remarks as much as they edit their work.

I have struggled, too, with Steven Vail Fine Arts, even though the work is clearly on the center of the program. I find *Art et Architecture* to be too densely hung and I find the wall texts to be very distracting as they seem more focused on establishing the print's value than placing the work within the conceptual context of the exhibition. That said, who would pass up the chance to marvel at the little details like the pencil marks stacked up on Richard Tuttle and Kiki Smith's collaboration, *Bouquet?*

A R T C I T Y

Exuberant Politics openings at PS1/CSPS
CSPS | THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 5-7 P.M.
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The newly-occupied art space at PS1, a performance venue and gallery, will hold a month of events in conjunction with its multi-site “celebration of art and activism.” Included in the show is SeedBroadcast's “SWAP” project, a mobile station for exchanging seeds and stories about agriculture and land. Seed swapping stations from both PS1 and CSPS galleries will be periodically taken ‘into the field’ to community centers across eastern Iowa. Stops include the West Branch Public Library (March 7), the Ely Farmer's Market (March 8), NewBo City Market (Cedar Rapids, March 15), Seed Savers Exchange (Decorah, March 22) and the Iowa City Winter Market (Sycamore Mall, March 30). See exuberant-politics.art.uiowa.edu for more information and events.



Tatsuya Nakatani with Curt Oren
ROZZ-TOXX—SUNDAY, MARCH 16 AT 8 P.M.
(\$5)

At his Iowa City show in December, experimental percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani (born in Osaka, Japan and now living in Eaton, Penn.) blew the basement lid off the new PS1 performance space. His most recent project is a non-traditional music orchestra exploring the rich harmony of multiple gongs. Curt Oren will open and collaborate with Nakatani at the Rozz-Toxx (Rock Island) show. Oren is the resident artist at PS1 and a circular-breathing saxophonist and songwriter who also works as a featured player in Dana T's band. During Mission Creek, Oren will play at the Yacht Club on April 2.



FULL FLUX

Drawing by Z.G. Phelps at David and Linda Paul Gallery | Photo by Brian Prugh



HEAD

Painting by Josh Doster at White Rabbit
Photo by Brian Prugh



STEAM SCREAM

Painting by Rob Dietrich at Chait Galleries
Downtown | Photo by Brian Prugh

I didn't stop by the other two commercial galleries in town on my walk, which remained confined to the area around the ped mall. The Hudson River Gallery is a few blocks south on Gilbert and McNutt Gallery is on Stevens Drive, near the Hy-Vee on the south side of town. Hudson River has been an Iowa City institution for a long time and has had some compelling shows in its rambling space—a show of work by Jamie Boling last year created quite a bit of buzz around town. The McNutt Gallery just opened this past summer, and is genuinely based on the big city gallery model: a clean space dedicated to the work it is showing. McNutt's program is still in its infancy, and I am hopeful that the gallery will continue to grow and develop. McNutt seems to be reaching out to and attempting to

cultivate a new set of collectors in Iowa City, which will only strengthen the scene here.

I can't say much about my favorite places to look at art right now. The galleries in Art Building West and Studio Arts are great, with clean white walls, no attendants and work that is consistently searching, if—because it is student work—not always finding what it is searching for. The MFA thesis show season is in full swing, so there is a lot to look at now. The UI Museum of Art's space in the Black Box Theater recently opened *Art and Life in Africa*, and PS1 will return to exhibiting regularly this month with a collaborative show with Legion Arts in Cedar Rapids, *Exuberant Politics*. **iv**

Disclosure: As an artist and critic in Iowa City, I have some connection to most of the goings-on in the city—though none of it comes with direct financial benefit. Of the shows mentioned, I know Mary Coats, the curator at Prairie Lights, Josh Doster, John Englebrecht at PS1, and I was encouraged to write criticism by Sean O'Harrow at the UIMA. I've had conversations with Dawn Harbor, who curates the Englert space, Breianna Cochran at Steven Vail Fine Arts and Jeff McNutt of McNutt Gallery. I am a student and teaching assistant at the University of Iowa, so the MA/MFA shows are those of my friends and colleagues. I will also have a painting in the Exuberant Politics show.

—Brian Prugh



Paul Gauguin and Arman Seguin, *La Femme aux Figues (The Woman with Figs)*, 1894, etching, gift of Peter O. Stearns, 73.2.40.

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This exhibition is made possible in part by a Program Fund Grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

This exhibition looks at the work of artists active in France over the course of the past 400 years, revealing many of the major European art movements during that time.

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MASTERING THE LANGUAGE

At this year's Oscars, many noteworthy foreign films were overlooked due to Academy rules. Here are a few. • **BY WARREN SPROUSE**

In a mid-career interview with Swedish television, Ingmar Bergman was asked about how a filmmaker should treat his or her audience. He responds by telling a sort of morality tale about a Chinese wood carver during the Middle Ages who is asked to sculpt a wooden bell stand for a local temple. The carver makes three attempts, all of which fail. During each of these attempts, Bergman tells us, the carver is focused on a different motive for his carving: first on money, then on love, then on achieving artistic immortality. During the creation of the final version of the carving, which is ultimately successful and a work of extreme beauty, the carver has but one thought in his mind: to carve a bell stand.

With the awards season recently completed, one may hope that all the filmmakers not taking home an Oscar or Palm d'Or hold a similarly stoic attitude toward the lack of honors their films received, though we might also guess this was an easier perspective for a filmmaker with three Oscars for best foreign language film on his bookshelf in Faro. Nowhere is the field of high-quality also-rans as deep as the foreign film category at this month's Academy Awards, a situation that is both cause for optimism for American filmgoers, and that may also suggest some problems in the Academy's selection process.

This year's best foreign film category received the most entries in the history of the award: 76 total, representing 40 percent of the countries on Earth currently recognized by the United Nations. The quantity of entries,

however, may highlight one of the fundamental problems with the award: While the overall best picture award pool includes as many as 10 American films (or at least English-language films, usually produced by American companies), the best foreign film category is limited to five nominees from literally every other country on the planet. It is also limited to a single film from each country, thus short-changing countries with several potential winners. The most obvious victim in this year's Oscars being Japan, which submitted *The Great Passage* in an apparent attempt to get more notoriety for its younger generation of directors instead of HiraKazu Koreeda's *Like Father, Like Son*. Neither film made the short list of finalists for the Oscar.

In addition to Koreeda's Cannes-decorated film, *Gloria* and *Heli* are terrific films that failed to make the final five in contention for best foreign language film at the recent Academy Awards. Their directors were probably focused only on making really awesome bell stands.

Like Father, Like Son (Japan)

HIRAKAZU KOREEDA

THROUGH MARCH 6 AT FILMSCENE

Nothing makes you question your parenting skills like finding out that your son was switched at birth in the hospital. Successful executive Ryota Nonomiya (Masaharu Fukuyama) must face precisely this dilemma in the most recent film from the director of

Nobody Knows (2004). Beyond the predictable themes of nature vs. nurture and the question of what family truly is, Koreeda's poignant film gets at questions of social class in contemporary Japan and the nature of paternal identity in one of the most traditionally paternalistic societies in the modern world.

Gloria (Chile)

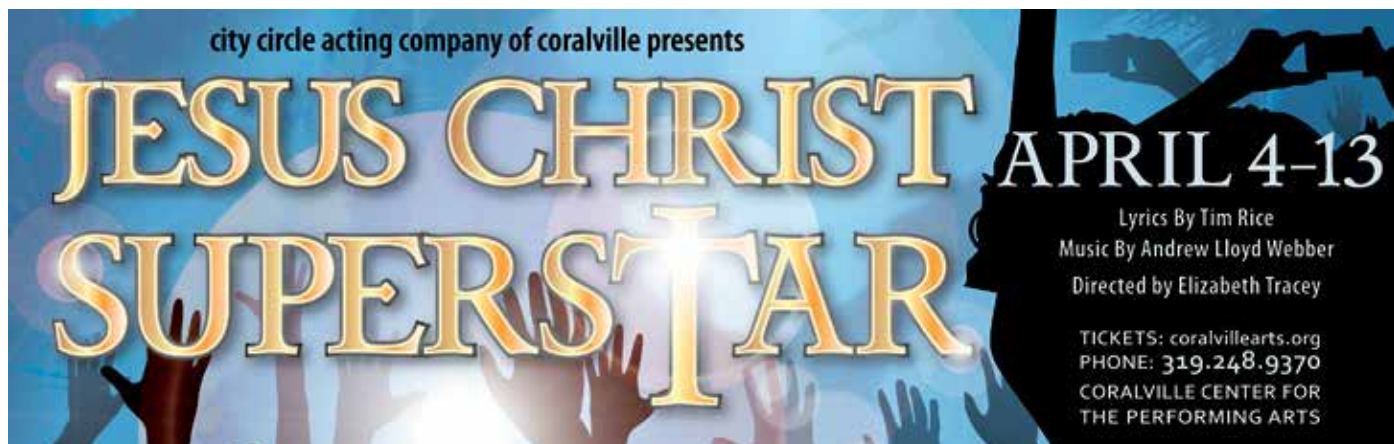
SEBASTIÁN LELIO

OPENING MARCH 14 AT FILMSCENE

Gloria's absence from the best foreign film category may most suggest the need for chang-

NOWHERE IS THE FIELD OF HIGH-QUALITY ALSO-RANS AS DEEP AS THE FOREIGN FILM CATEGORY AT THIS MONTH'S ACADEMY AWARDS, A SITUATION THAT IS BOTH CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM FOR AMERICAN FILMGOERS, AND THAT MAY ALSO SUGGEST SOME PROBLEMS IN THE ACADEMY'S SELECTION PROCESS.

es in the Academy's nomination process. This Chilean film is about a Gloria (Paulina García) feisty 58-year-old woman who is not letting middle age slow her down. The film deals with her relationship with a former naval officer whom she meets at a dance club and the burdens of a new relationship at a time when the title character is more concerned with living for herself. Sebastián Lelio's film is also a subtle commentary on the role of the past within the consciousness of modern Chileans and images of femininity within a traditionally paternalistic culture. It is one of the many exciting films coming out of the burgeoning Latin American cinema.



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The Lego Movie

DIRECTED BY CHRIS MCCAY

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In its continued attempt to be more like Disney, Lego has developed an animated film about a young Lego figure named Emmet Brickowski who, for reasons unclear to him and to viewers, becomes a crucial player in saving the world from the evil Lord Business and his special freeze weapon which looks a lot like Krazy Glue. Sort of a Hobbit satire with voices by Will Arnett, Elizabeth Banks and, inevitably, Morgan Freeman.

Pompeii

DIRECTED BY PAUL W.S. ANDERSON

SYCAMORE AND CORAL RIDGE THEATERS

If you are a Roman slave and they give you the chance to be a gladiator instead, be very careful. Milo (Kit Harrington) finds himself in this dilemma while fighting against corrupt Roman officials and a race against the imminently erupting Mt. Vesuvius to save his girlfriend Cassia (Emily Browning). The love story is nice, but things don't go well for the city.



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Heli (Mexico)


AMAT ESCALANTE

Optimists among us may feel that the recent capture of Shorty Guzman marks a turning point in Mexico's drug war. Amat Escalante's film will beg to disagree with that assessment. Similar in both tone and construction with Hany Abu-Assad's *Omar* (which made the cut), *Heli* is a fractured love story constrained by the asphyxiating world of the Mexican drug cartels—a world in which any question of disloyalty is necessarily one of life and death.



Escalante does an excellent job of highlighting the effect of drug violence on the more remote parts of Mexico that don't receive coverage on the U.S. evening news, and he accentuates how even simple acts of human kindness, generosity and love are politicized within the tense and oppressive climate in which the cartels potentially control most aspects of life, even for ordinary Mexicans. **IV**

Warren Sprouse teaches in Cedar Rapids. He is incessantly listening to Robbie Fulks until baseball season starts.

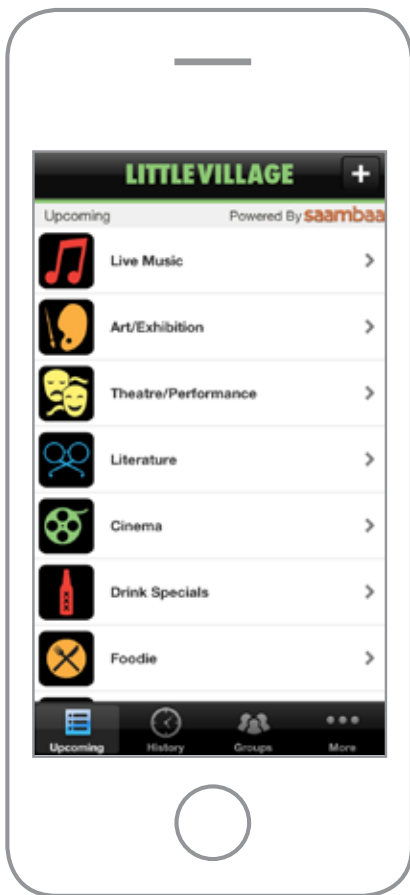


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Moonface w. Salt Cathedral

THE MILL | MARCH 5 | 8 P.M. | \$8-12 | 19+

Moonface is the name of Spencer Krug's solo music project. A former member of indie rock juggernaut Wolf Parade, as well as Sunset Rubdown, an art-rock band in the shape of Destroyer, the Montreal-based musician's current work is a completely different.

Moonface's two albums are emotional and raw. While somewhat obscured by the synths and drum machines on 2011's *Organ Music Not Vibraphone Like I'd Hoped*, these emotions sit plain on the surface of Krug's most recent album *Julia With Blue Jeans On*. Armed with only his words, voice and a piano, Krug puts himself out on the track much in the same way that Beck did on his *Sea Change* album. The result is a collection of songs that is as beautiful and artistic as it is emotional. Fans of Krug will still find the artist that they enjoyed in his past projects, and those intrigued by the darkness that lies within people will also find much to like.—A.C. Hawley

MUSIC

ONGOING

MONDAYS: Open Mic with J. Knight *The Mill* Free, 8 pm

TUESDAYS: Blues Jam *Parlor City Pub and Eatery* Free, 8 pm

Lower Deck Dance Party *Iowa City Yacht Club* \$2, 10 pm

WEDNESDAYS: Free Jam Session and Mug Night *Iowa City Yacht Club* Free, 10 pm

THURSDAYS: Country Dancing *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon* Free, 6 pm

WED., MARCH 5

Volumes, **KINGS**, Doppelganger, Beyond Andromeda *Blue Moose Tap House*, \$12, 5 pm

Moonface, Salt Cathedral *The Mill*, \$8-\$12, 6 pm
Improvisation for Classical Musicians *University of Iowa*, Free, 7 pm

Open Mic *The Vault-Cedar Rapids*, Free, 8 pm

The Sapwoods, Valaska, Clairaudients, Unnamed Acoustic *Gabe's (Oasis Stage)*, Free, 9 pm

THURS., MARCH 6

Pied Piper Concert: Woodwind Quintet *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown*, Free, 9 am, 10 am, 11 am

UI School of Music *University of Iowa*, Free, 5 pm

Farraday, The Promised Hero *Gabe's*, \$7, 6 pm

Daddy-O *Parlor City Pub and Eatery* Free, 7 pm

Tom Nothnagel Personal concert *Mendoza Wine Bar*, \$3, 7 pm

Dustin Busch *Clinton Street Social Club*, Free, 8 pm

Verskotzi *The Mill*, \$6, 9 pm

FRI., MARCH 7

Pied Piper Concert: Woodwind Quintet *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown*, Free, 9 am, 10 am, 11 am

First Friday Jazz *Opus Concert Cafe*, \$12, 5 pm

Camerata/University Choir *University of Iowa*, Free, 7 pm



The Grouch & Eligh w. Madchild, Pigeon John & Dj Fresh

BLUE MOOSE TAP HOUSE | MARCH 10 | 6 P.M. | \$15-17 |

ALL AGES

The Bay Area has long been a hotbed of hip-hop talent. Immediately recognizable artists like Del the Funky Homosapien, DJ Shadow, Mix Master Mike, E-40 and Too \$hort came from this scene. The Grouch and Eligh have long been contributors to this and the larger California scene as well. Hailing from Oakland and Los Angeles respectively, The Grouch and Eligh are talented both on and off the mic: As producers, both men have made beats for rappers like Murs, Company Flow and Freestyle Fellowship, among others.

On the mic, The Grouch and Eligh are not like many other underground rappers who spend their time being mad at labels for not getting a deal, because they have the freedom to do whatever the fuck they please. Both men are positive and easygoing and really just want to have a good time, which becomes clear in their live shows. Old school backpackers, fans of positive rap and those that just want something different from the guns-girls-and-grills treadmill of regular rap will enjoy this show.—AH

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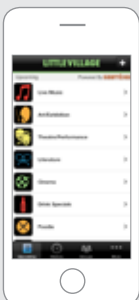


Pearl and the Beard

CSPS | MARCH 16 | 7 P.M. | \$12-15

I don't often write about folk bands, but Brooklyn-based Pearl and the Beard stand out from the rest of the folk-pop fold in a couple of different ways. The first is that they are not relentlessly cheery or obsessed with being cute and old-timey. While they do have their share of cute acoustic songs, just as many of their songs are dark and unsettling. The trio of Jocelyn Mackenzie, Emily Hope Price and Jeremy Styles use guitar, drums, keyboards and percussion to create a bit of modern menace in the otherwise bubbly world of folk-pop.

Pearl and the Beard also stands apart for their lovely harmonies. While some new folk-pop bands sound like they are straining to be in sync, Pearl and the Beard's harmonies are lush and beautiful, a true testament to their singing skills. I'm even more impressed by how the harmonies come to them so naturally: It makes it feel like they have been singing together for more than six years and should make for a pleasant show when they visit Cedar Rapids. —AH



ABOUT THE CALENDAR

THE LITTLE VILLAGE CALENDAR serves hundreds of area venues and reaches 150,000 readers per month. Listings are published free of charge at littlevillagemag.com/calendar, on the free calendar app **Best of I.C. (iOS, Android)** and in **Little Village Magazine** (on a space-available basis).

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MUSIC (cont.)

UI School of Music Presents: Camerata/University Choir Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm
James McMurtry, Dave Moore The Mill, \$15, 8 pm
Cedric Watson Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$17-\$21, 8 pm
Two-Bit Maniac Mendoza Wine Bar, \$3, 8 pm

Dick Prall The Englert Theatre, \$16, 8 pm
Ryan McNamara University of Iowa, Free, 8 pm
Diane Birch, Andrew Belle Blue Moose Tap House, \$12-\$15, 9 pm
Massive Ego Gabe's (Oasis Stage), Free, 9 pm
In Rooms Public Space ONE, Free, 9 pm
Blue Dog Blues Band Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm
Cosby Sweater, Rotary Club Iowa City Yacht Club, \$7-\$10, 10 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

Pied Piper Concert with Orchestra Iowa Iowa City Public Library, Free, 10 am
Wylde Nept The Mill, \$10, 7 pm
T. Mills, Mod Sun, Farroh, Kid Slim Blue Moose Tap House, \$15-\$17, 7 pm
UI School of Music Presents: Kantorei Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm
The Agency Band Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 8 pm
Downward Fal Chrome Horse Saloon, Free, 9 pm
Sound Daze Cocktails & Company, \$3, 9 pm
Back Home Boys Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm
Whysowhite, Bony Pony Iowa City Yacht Club, \$6, 10 pm
Sketch Tha Cataclysm, Rabbi Darkside, AWTHNKTS, Sotr Caf Gabe's, \$10, 10 pm
Karaoke Checkers Tavern Free, 9 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Sunday Funday Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon Free, 11 am
Latin Jazz Recital University of Iowa, Free, 1 pm
Marching Band Practice Public Space ONE Free, 3 pm
The Henry Girls Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$15-\$18, 7 pm
Shu-Min Chang University of Iowa, Free, 8 pm
Shaved Women, Fault Finder Gabe's (Oasis Stage), Free, 9 pm
Aaron Kamm & The One Drops Iowa City Yacht Club, \$8, 9 pm
Wei Zhongle Public Space ONE, Free, 10 pm
HRVRD, A Little Strange, Blue Moose Tap House, \$10, 7pm

MON., MARCH 10

The Grouch & Eligh, Madchild, Pigeon John, DJ Fresh Blue Moose Tap House, \$15-\$17, 6 pm
Savage Hacks Public Space ONE, Free, 8 pm

TUES., MARCH 11

Slices: Performance and Pie *Uptown Bill's, Free, 6 pm*

Afroman, Fooch *Gabe's, \$10-\$15, 10 pm*

WED., MARCH 12

Yu-Han Kuan *University of Iowa, Free, 6 pm*

Buckwheat Zydeco *Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$20-\$25, 7 pm*

UI School of Music Presents: Beyond the Great American

Songbook *Riverside Recital Hall at UI, Free, 7 pm*

Burlington Street Bluegrass Band *The Mill, \$5, 8 pm*

Half Truths *Gabe's (Oasis Stage), Free, 9 pm*

THURS., MARCH 13

Lojo Russo *Mendoza Wine Bar, \$3, 7 pm*

Aura Strohschein *University of Iowa, Free, 8 pm*

Daddy-O *Parlor City Pub and Eatery Free, 7 pm*

Black Daniels & The Bears, All Dogs Invited, James

Kennedy, *Blue Moose Tap House, \$5, 8 pm*

FRI., MARCH 14

Jazz After Five *The Mill, Free, 5 pm*

Open Mic *Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm*

Silver Wings *Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 8 pm*

Josh Sazon Live & Kate Thompson *Mendoza Wine Bar, \$3, 8 pm*

Pork Tornadoes *Chrome Horse Saloon, Free, 9 pm*

Super Size Seven *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm*

Low Forms, Sweet Chariot, Douglas Kramer Nye *Trumpet*

Blossom Cafe, Free, 9 pm

Jesse White Band *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$5, 10 pm*

Bass Culture *Gabe's, \$5, 10 pm*

SAT., MARCH 15

Soul Fusion *Parlor City Pub and Eatery, Free, 8 pm*

All Night Kitchen *Mendoza Wine Bar, \$3, 8 pm*

Dervish *The Englert Theatre, \$22-\$25, 8 pm*

De Temps Antan *Legion Arts CSPA Hall, \$20-\$25, 8 pm*

The Chocolate Crackers *Chrome Horse Saloon, Free, 9 pm*

8 Seconds *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon, \$5, 9 pm*

Marbin, Sub Tidal *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$6, 10 pm*

Item 9 and the Mad Hatters, Whistleblower, The Treats, knubby, Gentlemen Ninjas *Gabe's, \$5, 10 pm*

SUN., MARCH 16

Everything Fitz *Iowa City Community Theatre, \$20, 3 pm*

That 1 Guy *Gabe's, \$15, 8 pm*

Sunday Funday *Wildwood Smokehouse & Saloon Free, 11 am*

Marching Band Practice *Public Space ONE Free, 3 pm*

MON., MARCH 17

Crazy Delicious *Chrome Horse Saloon, Free, 2 pm*

St. Patrick's Day Massacre XI *Iowa City Yacht Club, \$5, 7 pm*

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MUSIC (cont.)

Fullset Legion Arts CSPS Hall, \$25-\$30, 7 pm

TUES., MARCH 18

Being as an Ocean, A lot Like Birds, My Iron Lung, Idle Hands, This Wild Life Blue Moose Tap House, \$12-\$14, 5 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

THEATRE/PERFORMANCE

ONGOING:

MONDAYS: Catacombs of Comedy Iowa City Yacht Club \$3, 9 pm

THROUGH MARCH 9: Walking the Wire Riverside Theatre, \$15-30, 7:30 pm (2 pm on Sunday)

This year, the theme for Riverside Theatre's monologue festival is "Merge." Actors will perform twelve 10-minute monologues inspired by this theme and submitted by playwrights from around the country. Come to Walking the Wire for a night of variety—and to find out how much story 10 minutes can hold.

THROUGH MARCH 15: For Colored Girls Who Have

Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf, Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$10-15, 7:30 pm (2 pm on Sunday)

Ntozake Shange's groundbreaking 1975 work For Colored Girls . . . was the play that coined the concept of a "choreopoem," a theatrical performance that combines dance and poetry in a way that emphasizes emotion over narrative. Directed by Angie Toomsen, the play features seven black women performing poems about the experience of African American women in modern times. The roles have no names, but rather colors, emphasizing the universality of their experiences.

Shange developed the show in California before it ran for 742 performances on Broadway, where it received a Tony nomination for best play. Don't bother watching the filmed adaptation written and directed by Tyler Perry whose involvement raised questions over whether a male director known for producing films with problematic gender and sexual politics could successfully capture the essence of a black feminist play. Though it featured some excellent performances, the film received mostly negative reviews, and even Oprah Winfrey doubted whether the play could ever be filmed. Ultimately, any attempt to force this experience into a mold to make it more linear or commercial will ring false. See the play the way it was meant to be experienced—as a live show that evokes a mood unfettered by conventional storytelling.

THROUGH MARCH 15: Frankly Scarlett, You're Dead Old Creamery Theatre \$47, 5:30 pm

THROUGH MARCH 15: Absurd Person Singular Theatre

Building at UI \$17, 8 pm (2 pm on Sunday)

Winter is (hopefully) ending, but it is always a good time of year for Christmas mayhem. The UI Theatre Department puts on this 1972 farce by British playwright Alan Ayckbourn about the antics of three couples on three Christmas Eves. As the years pass, fortunes fluctuate and relationships adapt to new circumstances.

MARCH 14-15, 21-22: Time Stands Still Dreamwell Theatre at the Unitarian Universalist Society \$10-13, 7:30 pm

Donald Margulies continues his examination of couples in crisis with the topical Time Stands Still. Sarah and James are a photographer and journalist who are sent home from covering the Iraq War due to physical and mental injuries. As they both heal, challenges to both their work and their relationship arise.

WED., MARCH 5

Spoken Word Uptown Bill's, Free, 7 pm

THURS., MARCH 6

Hancher Presents: Ragamala Dance Space Place Theater at UI, \$10-\$35, 7 pm

Walking the Wire: Monologue Festival Riverside Theatre Iowa City, 7:30 pm

FRI., MARCH 7

Scooby-Doo Live! Musical Mysteries Paramount Theatre

PRO-TIPS

BUSINESS INTER-FRIENDSION

Wayne diamante, author of *Sticky Situations: Choosing the right Solvent for Hypothetical Emergency Scenarios* and *Mayonnaise: How much is Too Much?* shares his wisdom and inner monologue with readers in *Pro-Tips with Wayne Diamante*. Do you have a question or need advice from a stranger? Let Wayne be that stranger. Hit him up at aswaynediamante@gmail.com • BY Wayne Diamante

Dear Wayne,
I have a friend who's unfortunately turned into a home marketing nightmare. She tries to sell me beauty products every time we see each other. Most recently, I asked her to meet me for coffee: I really wanted to talk about my complications with menopause and some apprehension I have regarding an elective surgery my husband's having done. Instead, she kept steering the conversation toward beauty products. Turns out, there are some problems wrinkle cream and a night mask can't solve. I care for my friend, but how do I tell her (politely) to fuck off with the beauty product bullshit?
Sincerely,
Barb

Dear Barb,

Thanks for your question and I hope you're doing OK. Call up your friend and schedule a get together in a public place, like a coffee shop. As soon as her sales pitch starts, just take whatever tube of face sauce she's peddling and squirt it all out against the wall, tell her she sucks and that if your friendship is important to her she'll knock off the Mary Kay bunk while you're together. Next, tell her that if you're interested in her products you'll let her know. Then tip her coffee over and say, "Your face makes your ass look fat." If the friendship is worth saving, she'll come around.
Problem Solved,
Wayne

Dear Wayne,

What are your thoughts on the controversy surrounding Adelina Sotnikova taking the gold in women's figure skating? It's obvious to anyone who knows anything about the sport that the judging was rigged. Kim Yu-na's programs were flawless, and her complex understanding of the musicality of her pieces belied a magnificent wisdom beyond her years and, if I may, well outside the bounds of a formal K-12 education. How can we clean up this sport?!

Cordially,

Serge

Dear Serge,

There are only two things interesting about figure skating:
1) The mind-boggling number of adjectives

Cedar Rapids, \$15-\$65, 7 pm

Hancher Presents: Ragamala Dance Space Place Theater at UI, \$10-\$35, 7 pm

The Midnight Swinger Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$12.50, 7 pm

Walking the Wire: Monologue Festival Riverside Theatre Iowa City, 7:30 pm

Krimson Komedy Showcase Gabe's, \$10, 10 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

Greg Warren, Josh Arnold The Vault Cedar Rapids, \$20, 7 pm

The Midnight Swinger Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault, \$12.50, 7 pm

Walking the Wire: Monologue Festival Riverside Theatre Iowa City, 7:30 pm

Pink Martini Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$27-\$79, 8 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Walking the Wire: Monologue Festival Riverside Theatre Iowa City, 2 pm

Greg Warren, Josh Arnold The Vault-Cedar Rapids, \$20, 7 pm

the commentators use to describe how magnificent and marvelous the EXACT SAME trick is over and over again. The skater jumps in the air, spins around and then Scott Hamilton and Sandra Bezic barf superlatives all over each other trying to describe which one of them has the bigger boner over whatever it was they just saw.

2) That people continue to give a shit about figure skating every four years.

Number 2 is absolutely fascinating to me. Actually, there are three interesting things. The third is the sheer improbability of every skater having to triumph over adversity. I swear to god; if I had a nickel for every time I heard one of the talking heads say, "She was going to call it quits after her spectacular meltdown four years ago, but here she is again, this time competing for Olympic gold in the blah blah blah." But to answer your question, I don't believe it is possible to legitimize the voting. Figure skating is inherently subjective, and, as we all know, the same turd will taste different to different people. I'm not quite sure how to wrap this up in a satisfying way for you Good luck with everything, I guess?

Wayne

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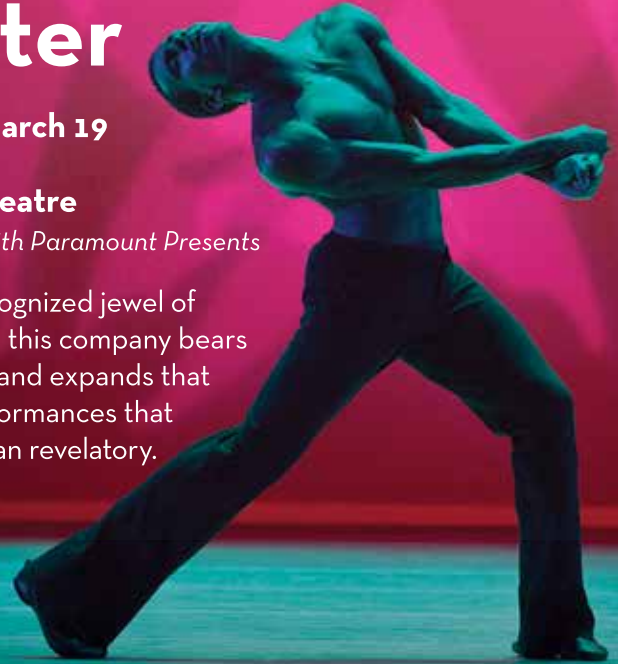
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THEATRE/ PERFORMANCE (cont.)

TUES., MARCH 11

Book Wings (Iraq) Theatre B, UI Theatre Building, Free, 9 am

WED., MARCH 12

Lightwire Theater The Englert Theatre, \$20-\$35, 6 pm
Open Mic - Comedy The Vault-Cedar Rapids, Free, 7 pm

THURS., MARCH 13

Book Wings (Russia) Theatre B, UI Theatre Building, Free, 11 am
Branson on the Road Old Creamery Theatre \$18-\$30, 2 pm
The Janice Ian Experience The Mill, Free, 9 pm

FRI., MARCH 14

Branson on the Road, Old Creamery Theatre, \$18-\$30, 2 pm
Time Stands Still, Unitarian Universalist Society, \$10-13, 7:30 pm
National Theatre Live: War Horse The Englert Theatre, \$15-\$18, 7 pm

Sean Kent *Penguin's Comedy Club, The Vault*, \$12.50, 7 pm

SAT., MARCH 15

Follies 2014: The BEST of the Baby Boomer Years Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$19-\$35, 2 pm
Branson on the Road Old Creamery Theatre \$18-\$30, 2 pm
Time Stands Still, Unitarian Universalist Society, \$10-13, 7:30 pm
Kevin Farley, Dan Decostis The Vault-Cedar Rapids, Free, 7 pm
Follies 2014: The BEST of the Baby Boomer Years Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$19-\$35, 7 pm
Sean Kent *Penguin's Comedy Club at The Vault*, \$12.50, 7 pm
Comedy Showcase The Mill, \$6, 9 pm

SUN., MARCH 16

Follies 2014: The BEST of the Baby Boomer Years Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$19-\$35, 2 pm
Kevin Farley, Dan Decostis The Vault-Cedar Rapids Free, 7 pm

MON., MARCH 17

Celtic Fire Paramount Theatre Cedar Rapids, \$24-\$45,

8 pm

Kevin Farley, Dan Decostis *The Vault Cedar Rapids* Free, 7 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

ART / EXHIBITIONS

ONGOING:

THURSDAYS: Open Lab *Beadology Iowa* \$15-18, 4 pm
SUNDAYS: Open Lab *Beadology Iowa* \$0-\$18, 12 pm
Community Work Time *Public Space ONE* Free, 1 pm
THROUGH MAY 11: Conger Metcalf Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art \$0-\$5, All Day
THROUGH MAY 25: Papier Francais Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art Free - \$5, 12 pm
March 6-April 8 Exhuberant Politics *Public Space ONE*, Free, All Day
March 3-8 Yang Meng, MFA Graphic Design, Eve Drewelowe Gallery, Studio Arts Building
March 10-15 Luis Gonzalo Pinilla Gomez, MA Printmaking, Eve Drewelowe Gallery
March 17-22 Whitney Wright, MA Art Education, Eve Drewelowe Gallery
March 24-29 Amanda Murphy, MFA Sculpture, Eve

SAVAGE LOVE

MOIST TOILETTE

In this week's column, readers question some interesting bathroom behaviors.
BY DAN SAVAGE

Straight female with a question. It's about something that sometimes happens to me that I've never really told anyone about because it's so weird and gross. It involves my bowel movements, so it's not very sexy. (No offense to scat lovers, but I have zero interest in "poop play.") After I have a normal bowel movement, I pull up my jeans. When I do that, the crotch seam presses on my clit as I begin to close the zipper, and I get what I can only describe as an intense mini-orgasm. This is directly related to the recent BM because it happens only after one. I find myself just standing there in the bathroom, holding my pants up with my hands frozen on the zipper, eyes half closed, gently pressing my jeans into my crotch while my clit just hammers out an unsolicited series of intense orgasmic spasms. It's not really a full-on climax, rather just a dozen or so fast and strong fluttering contractions of pleasure

right in my clit/pussy area. I find myself enjoying these post-poop-gasms when they happen, although it's something I've kept to myself for obvious reasons. I am not complaining. I am merely curious to know if you've ever heard of this and if you know why and how it happens. Do other people have similar experiences?

—Possibly Odd Or Perhaps Curious
Orgasm Mostly Enjoyed Regularly

I shared your letter with Dr. Debby Herbenick, a research scientist at Indiana University, a sexual health educator at the Kinsey Institute and the author of *Great in Bed* and numerous books about sexuality.

Dr. Herbenick's short answer: "Genitals are magical, mysterious places of wonder."

And her much more satisfying long answer: "There are other documented cases of people having orgasms while pooping. Most are on internet message boards, but some have



made it into the medical and scientific literature. 'Defecation-induced orgasms' seem to be more common than orgasms from peeing, but both kinds happen."

Drewelowe Gallery

March 31-April 5 Corinne Teed, MA Printmaking, Eve Drewelowe Gallery

March 3-8 Rachel Livedalen, MFA Printmaking, Levitt Gallery, Art Building West

March 10-15 Matt Weber, MFA Photography, Levitt Gallery

March 17-22 Joshua Doster, MFA Painting, Levitt Gallery

March 24-29 Sal Aleto & Yelena Mass, MFA Jewelry & Metals, Levitt Gallery

WED., MARCH 5

Art Bites Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, Free, 12 pm

The Black Tongue Lexicon Public Space ONE, Free, 7 pm

THURS., MARCH 6

Exuberant Politics opening reception Legion Arts, Free, 5-7 pm

FRI., MARCH 7

Rediscovery The Chait Galleries Downtown, Free, 5 pm

UIMA First Friday: See and Be Scene FilmScene, Free, 5 pm

Exuberant Politics opening reception Public Space ONE, Free, 7 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

Make 3 Pairs of Earrings: Intro to Wirework Beadology Iowa, \$55, 1 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Next Steps in Soft Glass Work Beadology Iowa, \$95, 12 pm

Sunday Night Bead Club: Brick Stitch Techniques Beadology Iowa, \$45, 5 pm

THURS., MARCH 13

Herringbone Stitch Techniques Beadology Iowa, \$45, 5 pm

SAT., MARCH 15

Marvin Cone on My Mind Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, Free - \$5, 12 pm

SUN., MARCH 23

Taking Shape Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art Free - \$5, 12 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

CINEMA

SAT., MARCH 1

Omar, FilmScene, 1:45pm, 6:30 pm

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 4pm, 8:30 pm

Do The Right Thing, FilmScene, 11 pm

SUN., MARCH 2

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 12:30 pm

Omar, FilmScene, 3 pm

Hollywood Live, FilmScene, 6 pm

MON., MARCH 3

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 6 pm

Omar, FilmScene, 8:15 pm

TUES., MARCH 4

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 8:15pm

Omar, FilmScene, 6pm

WED., MARCH 5

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 5:45pm, 8:15pm

THURS., MARCH 6

Like Father Like Son, FilmScene, 5:45pm, 8:15pm

Yes, yes: But why and how do defecation-induced orgasms happen?

“It’s not entirely clear, but here are some possibilities,” said Dr. Herbenick. “The pelvic nerve—which is one orgasmic pathway—links up to not only the vagina and cervix, but also the rectum and bladder. Another possibility is something called nerve ‘crosstalk.’ In essence, the genital and excretory parts are smooshed closely together, and some nerves (like the pelvic nerve) service more than one part. Thus, feelings and messages carried in the nerves can get a little muddled. For example, some people can have vaginal pain from bladder problems. Similarly, people describe genital orgasms from stimulation of nearby parts, and nerve crosstalk is thought to be part of that.” (Want to shut up an “intelligent design” creationist? Ask them to defend the ill-advised, none-too-intelligent smooshing together of our excretory and reproductive systems—after making them google “obstetric fistula.”)

“POOPCOMER doesn’t have to like the fact that she orgasms from pooping,” said Dr. Herbenick, “but it’s better than the opposite scenario: unintentionally pooping during orgasm. That also happens.”

Follow Dr. Herbenick on Twitter @

DebbyHerbenick.

Longtime reader, first-time letter writer. My 13-year-old stepson leaves his spooch on the goddamn toilet seat. How do I tell him to clean up after himself? I don’t know how he gets it on the toilet seat! Logistically, it baffles me!

—Step-Parent Ain’t Not Kleaning Spooch

That word you keep using—spooch—I don’t think it means what you think it means. Spooch is not slang for ejaculate, SPANKS, but it could be the world’s worst name for a dog. No, no, no: The word you want is spoooge. And I don’t think your sign-off means what you think it means, either. Putting a “not” after that ungrammatical “ain’t” means you’re anxious to clean your stepson’s spoooge off that goddamn toilet seat.

On to your questions ...

Logistics: Your stepson faces the toilet seat as he would when he pees and has himself a wank. He thinks he’s destroying the evidence when he flushes, SPANKS, but he’s obviously missing the drop or two that land on the toilet seat. Teenage boys are not famous for their attention to detail or for cleaning up after themselves. Replacing your white toilet seat with a black one might help your stepson notice that

flushing isn’t enough.

Telling him to clean up after himself: Your stepson’s father should have a talk with him. “You’re making a mess of the toilet seat,” his dad should say. “Put the seat up and wipe it off when you’re through.” If your stepson protests that he’s careful when he pees, his dad should tell him that he’s not talking about piss. That poor kid will be so mortified that he’ll blow loads out the window before he masturbates in the bathroom again.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A lowly, officious and quite pleased-with-herself copy editor has gleefully informed me that Urban Dictionary defines “spooch” as “semen” or “a man’s climax.” While I have the utmost respect for the modern-day Samuel Johnsons at Urban Dictionary, I refuse to acknowledge “spooch” as a synonym for semen or the male climax. **lv**

On the Lovecast, Dan speaks with the Perverted Negress about meeting polite kinksters online: savagelovecast.com.

mail@savagelove.net

@fakedansavage on Twitter



Denis Johnson: A Remedy for Loneliness

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA | MARCH 5-7

According to the Iowa Writers' Workshop, the acclaimed poet, playwright, essayist, short-story guru and award-winning novelist Denis Johnson has returned this year as a writer-in-residence to "interact with undergraduate writers and with the wider community." But we suspect the Workshop grad (1974), best known for his short-story collection *Jesus' Son* (1992) and his apocalypse-then Vietnam War era novel *Tree of Smoke* (2007), as well as over four decades of precise and other-worldly verse revered by poets from Manila to Marshalltown, is here to lift the veil, if only for a moment, for those of us too worn down by winter to care what's beyond it. His motives aside, he is among us. There is a Q&A with Johnson Wednesday, March 5, at 11 a.m. at the Workshop's Frank Conroy Reading Room, Dey House. The author will be reading selections from his fiction on Thursday, March 6, at 7 p.m. in Lecture Room 1 of Van Allen Hall. There will also be a reading of his plays and monologues on Friday, March 7, at 7 p.m. at the Frank Conroy Reading Room, Dey House. These events are free and open to the public, but seating at the Dey House is limited. Johnson can't shorten the bleakest winter in *Little Village* memory, but as he writes in his early poem "The White Fires of Venus," he may help you understand that "The remedy for loneliness is in learning to admit solitude as one admits the bayonet: gracefully, now that already it pierces the heart." —MJ

CINEMA (cont.)

FRI., MARCH 7

Bijou After Hours FilmScene Free-\$5, 11 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Cave of Forgotten Dreams Museum of Natural History at UI, Free+, 3 pm

WED., MARCH 12

Morbid Curiosities Old Capitol Museum, Free+, 6 pm

THURS., MARCH 13

Marlon Riggs Film Series University of Iowa, Free, 12 pm

FRI., MARCH 14

Bijou After Hours FilmScene Free-\$5, 11 pm

SAT., MARCH 15

Bijou After Hours FilmScene Free-\$5, 11 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

LITERATURE

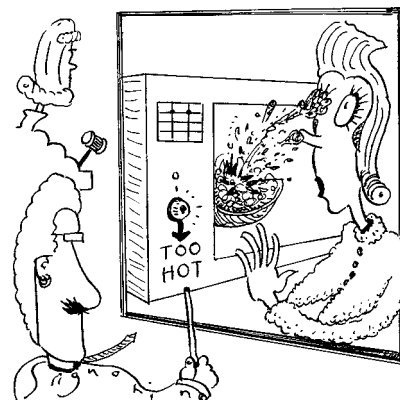
WED., MARCH 5

"Live from Prairie Lights": Yiyun Li Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm

THE STRAIGHT DOPE

ANYTHING NEW ON THE DANGERS OF MICROWAVE OVENS?

I work at the deli counter at a natural-foods store and recently one of my customers chided me for suggesting she warm up her food by microwaving it. She said microwaving changes the molecular structure of food and makes it dangerous. Being skeptical, I researched this online, mainly by searching through your old answers. Your May 2005 column said the jury was still out on this question. Any new information? —Bet P., Charleston, South Carolina



The jury was still out, although if my eyes don't deceive me they just filed back into the courtroom. More on that in a moment, but first a word. Next time you get some fragile eggshell mind telling you that "microwaving changes the molecular structure of food" (these exact words are always used), look them in the eye and reply as follows:

"You're 100 percent correct—it's been scientifically proven that microwaving changes the molecular structure of food. THIS IS CALLED COOKING, YOU NITWIT."

Sorry, needed to vent. Back to the jury. Their

verdict comes in the form of an article published last year entitled: "Microwave Effects in Organic Synthesis: Myth or Reality?"

The answer, not to kill the suspense, is: myth.

To recap, people freak out about microwaves because they use (horrors!) radiation, failing to grasp that there are two kinds of radiation: (1) ionizing, the high-energy kind produced by nuclear bombs, radioactive elements, and such, and (2) non-ionizing, the relatively low-energy type we encounter every day in the form of light, heat, and radio waves. Microwaves are located between radio and heat (infrared) on

the non-ionizing end of things. When, therefore we speak of "nuking" something in the microwave, that's not what we're actually doing; it's COMICAL EXAGGERATION FOR EFFECT, YOU FRICKING IMBE—

Excuse me—trying day. Microwave heating is different from conventional heating because, whereas infrared energy warms up pretty much any molecule it plows into, microwaves only affect molecules having polarity—that is, positive and negative ends, which rotate rapidly back and forth as the microwaves go by. A common type of polar molecule is water, which, happily for us, is distributed fairly

FRI., MARCH 7**Bonnie Brennen** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm***SAT., MARCH 8****Kate Kasten** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm***MON., MARCH 10****Kathryn Davis** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm***TUES., MARCH 11****Gina Frangello & Michael Parker** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm***WED., MARCH 12****Morbid Curiosities** *Old Capitol Museum, Free+, 6 pm*
Randall Kenan Reading Dey House- *Frank Conroy Reading Room, Free, 8 pm***THURS., MARCH 13****Julene Bair** *Prairie Lights Books & Cafe, Free, 7 pm**For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.***COMMUNITY****WED., MARCH 5****Power Breakfast Series** *Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, \$35, 7 am***Iowa City Open Coffee** *Iowa City Area Development Group, Free, 8 am***Ben S. Summerwill Lecture Series:** *Kevin W. O'Brien Sheraton Hotel, Free, 5 pm***THURS., MARCH 6****Make Kombucha at Home** *New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville, \$15, 6 pm***FRI., MARCH 7****First Friday Jazz** *Opus Concert Cafe, \$12, 5 pm*
UIMA First Friday: See and Be Scene *FilmScene, Free, 5 pm***Youth Off-Road Riders Silent Auction and Hand Built Bike Show** *Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Donation, 6 pm***SAT., MARCH 8****Crisis Center Pancake Breakfast** *Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, \$3-\$6, 7 am***Transcendental Meditation Introductory Presentation** *Iowa City Public Library Free, 4 pm***SUN., MARCH 9****Winter Farmer's Market** *Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am***Yoga Dinner** *Trumpet Blossom Cafe, \$35, 5 pm***Pub Quiz** *The Mill \$1, 9 pm***MON., MARCH 10****Transcendental Meditation Introductory Presentation** *Iowa City Public Library Free, 4 pm***WED., MARCH 12****Trivia Night** *Mendoza Wine Bar, \$5, 8 pm***THURS., MARCH 13****Transcendental Meditation Introductory Presentation** *Iowa City Public Library, Free, 6 pm***FRI., MARCH 14****New Bo Open Coffee Club** *Brewed Cafe, Free, 8 am***SUN., MARCH 16****Sunday Fun Day: St. Patrick's Day!** *Iowa City Public Library, Free, 2 pm***Yoga Dinner** *Trumpet Blossom Cafe, \$35, 5 pm**For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.*

evenly throughout many foods.

So while ordinary heat gets absorbed by the outer layer of a food and only slowly penetrates to the interior, microwave energy passes through most of the food as though it were transparent and heats up mainly the water, and to a degree the sorta polar fats and sugars, which in turn heat up everything else. The food thus cooks uniformly (more or less) and in much less time.

But let's be clear: heating is heating. The mainstream view is that microwaves basically do what conventional heating does, only faster. A few scientists, however, think there may be what are known as nonthermal microwave effects of possibly ominous significance. Since precision microwave ovens have become widely available in labs, an opportunity to settle this longstanding controversy is now at hand—or so it seemed in 2005.

Which brings us to the article cited above, published last year by three Austrian chemists, C. Oliver Kappe, Bartholomäus Pieber, and Doris Dallinger, in the journal *Angewandte Chemie* ("Applied Chemistry"). Having reviewed the literature and done some experiments, they report as follows:

- Everyone agrees microwaves are far too

low-energy to break molecular bonds and cause chemical reactions. (Cooking, whether done conventionally or with microwaves, unbends or "denatures" proteins, changing their shape much as one might unbend a paper clip, so in that sense it changes molecular structure. But it doesn't turn the molecules into something else.)

- That said, laboratory microwave ovens do things that are difficult or impossible to replicate with conventional heating. A reaction that might take five hours to complete if the starting mixture were simply boiled can be accomplished in one second using a microwave to superheat the stuff in a sealed vessel. The fact remains: these are still thermal effects.

- Claims of nonthermal microwave effects continue to show up in the scientific journals, but in the opinion of Oliver, Bart, and Doris, these are mostly due to (a) chemists not really getting how microwaves work and (b) experimental error. A common problem is inaccurate temperature monitoring.

- For instance, a scientific team led by one Dudley reported it had heated a chemical mixture to 100 degrees Celsius using both conventional and microwave heating. However, after 30 minutes, the reaction in the conventionally

heated mixture was only 25 percent complete, whereas in the microwaved mixture it was 90 percent. Since the temperature of the two mixtures was the same, Dudley and friends contended, this was evidence of a nonthermal microwave effect.

- *Kuhscheisse*, riposted our three skeptics. Team Dudley had used sensors that measured the surface temperature, not the internal temperature of the mix. The Austrians reran the experiment using an internal probe and found the reactions in the microwaved and conventionally heated mixtures occurred at exactly the same rate.

One article won't end the argument. But I'm inclined to agree with Oliver, Bart, and Doris: mysterious microwave effects (and presumably their attendant dangers) are a myth.

—CECIL ADAMS

Send questions to Cecil via straightdope.com or write him c/o Chicago Reader, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago 60654.

FOODIE

ONGOING:

SATURDAYS: Iowa City Winter Farmers Market Iowa City Market Place/Sycamore Mall Free, 10 am

THURS., MARCH 6

Make Kombucha at Home New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville, \$15, 6 pm

FRI., MARCH 7

Night at the Museum: Monkey Business Museum of Natural History at UI, \$25, 6 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

Crisis Center Pancake Breakfast Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, \$3-\$6, 7 am

Success with High-Value Orchard Crops New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville, Cover Charge, 12 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Winter Farmer's Market Johnson County Fairgrounds, Free, 11 am

Yoga Dinner Trumpet Blossom Cafe, \$35, 5 pm

MON., MARCH 10

Chardonnay Wine Tasting Devotay, Free, 6 pm

TUES., MARCH 11

Boeuf a la Mode: Winter Party Fare with Valerie Martin New Pioneer Food Co-op Coralville, \$15, 6 pm

Mississippi River Distilling Company Devotay, \$30, 6 pm

SUN., MARCH 16

Yoga Dinner Trumpet Blossom Cafe, \$35, 5 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

EDUCATIONAL

WED., MARCH 5

SBDC Lunch and Learn: SBIR BioVentures Center, Free, 12 pm

Lecture by Tom Teesdale University of Iowa, Free, 12 pm

Intro to Lampwork through Kirkwood Beadology Iowa, \$90, 5 pm

Art/Craft Networking Lecture By Brigitte Martin Art Building West at UI, Free, 7 pm

FRI., MARCH 7

Night at the Museum: Monkey Business Museum of Natural History at UI, \$25, 6 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

Orchard Crops: Design and Plant Selection Johnson County Fairgrounds, \$30-\$35, 8 am

Intro to Stringing Beadology Iowa, \$55, 10 am

SUN., MARCH 9

Garden Design without Blue Prints Iowa City Public Library, Free, 2 pm

James Gang Public Space ONE, Free, 4 pm

MON., MARCH 10

"Sowing the Seeds of Hope" Jane Goodall IMU Main Lounge, Free, 7 pm

TUES., MARCH 11

Kickoff: Data Problem Share IC CoLab, Free, 6 pm

Figure Drawing Session II Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art, \$50-\$75, 7 pm

NEWS QUIRKS

CURSES, FOILED AGAIN

• Denver police arrested four burglary suspects who tried to sell stolen goods back to their victim. Lacinda Robinson, 24, said that after discovering the crime, she went to a nearby McDonald's parking lot, where two young men offered her a PlayStation 3 video game similar to the one she lost. She declined, but when another youth approached her wearing a distinctive Washington Redskins jacket "that I believe belonged to me" she realized the men were selling her stuff. She reported the incident to two off-duty police. (*Denver's KMGH-TV*)

• A man aroused suspicion by repeatedly calling a post office in Nashville, Tenn., asking if a package had arrived. When it did show up, postal workers inspected it and found it reeked of marijuana. They alerted police, who arrested Terrell Mills, 24, when he came to claim the package, which contained 10 pounds of pot. (*Nashville's WSMV-TV*)

THE NEXT WINTER OLYMPICS EVENT

Quebec inventor Yvon Martel unveiled an electric-powered sled. Dubbed the MTT-136, it weighs about 280 pounds and can haul a person or cargo for 130 miles on an eight-hour charge. (*Popular Science*)

WHEN GUNS ARE OUTLAWED

Ken Birdsill, 56, reported that he was beaten and robbed by a man armed with an icicle. The victim said two men came to his house in Windsor, N.Y., demanding drugs and money. One man punched Birdsill in the face when he opened the door; the other hit him on the head with the icicle. (Binghamton's WBNG-TV)

HARD NEWS

The federal government overpaid by \$86.4 million to provide penis pumps to Medicare patients at twice the price private providers charge, according to the Health and Human Services Department's inspector general. The IG report noted that the vacuum erection systems cost taxpayers nearly \$175 million during the years 2006 to 2011 and that reducing the Medicare payment for the devices to the level of non-Medicare payers could save the federal government about \$18 million a year. (*The Washington Times*)

EXTREME MAKEOVER

Hoping to distance aspiring middle-class Kazakhstan from its low-class neighbors, President Nursultan Nazarbayev suggested eliminating "stan" from its name. The word means "place" in Persian, but Nazarbayev

said that it causes foreigners to lump the country with its economically less developed or more politically volatile neighbors. He suggested the name "Kazakh Yeli," or "Land of the Kazakhs," and invited public discussion of his proposal. (*The Economist*)

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT

Authorities in Mount Vernon, Ill., charged Sammy Kehrner, 47, with stabbing a 37-year-old man to death at a gun club. (*Associated Press*)

ROCKET SURGERY

• Two boys working on a school science project involving model rocketry caused an explosion so powerful that it blew out several windows of their Seattle home, blasted open the back door and propelled debris into the backyard. After the boys were hospitalized, one of the fathers said the boys had tried to start a fire in the fireplace and may have used some of the rocket fuel to get it going. (CNN)

• After students at Reed College in Portland, Ore., rolled a 900-pound snowball, a pair of math majors seized it and started shoving it toward a city street. They miscalculated its trajectory, however, and it ended up plowing into a dorm and ripping apart a room's wall. Maintenance workers spent 45 minutes

FRI., MARCH 14

Private Tutorials in Seed Bead Weaving *Beadology Iowa*, \$30, 1 pm

SAT., MARCH 15

Clover Earrings *Beadology Iowa*, \$75, 10 am

SUN., MARCH 16

Raised Triangle Earrings *Beadology Iowa*, \$65, 12 pm
Blown Glass Spheres *Beadology Iowa*, \$98, 1 pm

TUES., MARCH 18

Figure Drawing Session II *Cedar Rapids Museum Of Art*, \$50-\$75, 7 pm

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

KIDS**ONGOING:**

MONDAYS: Toddler Storytime *Iowa City Public Library* Free, 10 am

WEDNESDAYS: Story Time *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown* Free, 10 am

FRIDAYS: Play & Learn *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown* Free, 10 am

SATURDAYS: Family Story Time *Coralville & Iowa City Public Libraries*, Free, 10 am

THURS., MARCH 6

Kamber Club Begins: *Iowa Children's Museum*, Free-\$7, 9 am

Wee Read *Coralville Public Library*, Free, 10 am, 11 am

FRI., MARCH 7

Kamber Club Begins: *Iowa Children's Museum*, Free-\$7, 9 am

American Girl Fashion Show *Iowa Children's Museum*, \$25+, 7 pm

SAT., MARCH 8

American Girl Fashion Show *Iowa Children's Museum*, \$25+, 10 am, 2 pm

SUN., MARCH 9

Read to Therapy Dogs *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown*, Free, 2 pm

Art Adventure: Clay Play! *Iowa Children's Museum*, Free-\$7, 2 pm

Cave of Forgotten Dreams *Museum of Natural History at UI*, Free+, 3 pm

TUES., MARCH 11

Play & Learn *Cedar Rapids Public Library-Downtown*, Free, 6 pm

MON., MARCH 17

Spring Break Day Camps *Iowa Children's Museum*, Free-\$7, 9 am

TUES., MARCH 18

Spring Break Day Camps *Iowa Children's Museum*, Free-\$7, 9 am

For full listings go to littlevillagemag.com/calendar.

cutting through the 40-inch thick icy globe. (*Portland's The Oregonian*)

WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW

Alaric Hunt, 44, won a \$10,000 literary prize from Minotaur Books and the Private Eye Writers of America for his crime novel "Cuts Through Bone." The award includes a publishing contract for the author, a convicted murderer who has been in a South Carolina prison since 1988. Hunt said he assembled his view of the outside world for the novel from books he read and from episodes of television's "Law and Order." (*The New York Times*)

SLIGHTEST PROVOCATION

- James Jugo, 52, admitted beating his roommate to death in Tampa, Fla., after the two argued about a chicken foot. Roommate Benjamin Calderon, 52, objected when Jugo took the chicken foot from a skillet while Calderon was cooking it. (*Tampa Bay Times*)
- Travis Schelling, 35, assaulted his girlfriend, police in Phoenix, Ariz., said, because he didn't understand how Facebook works. According to investigators, whenever one of her friend's posts appeared on her news feed, Schelling thought other men were sending messages directly to her. Every time Schelling read a post, he would hit her. The attacks, which lasted

nearly four hours, included sexual assault, punching, slapping and pulling out clumps of hair. (*Phoenix's The Arizona Republic*)

LESSON UNLEARNED

Police who stopped Michael Heller, 21, for stealing a truck in Redding, Calif., said he told them he needed it to make a court appearance for stealing another vehicle. (*Redding Record Searchlight*)

OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

When Google announced it was buying Nest, a high-tech thermostat and smoke-detector company, for \$3.2 billion, investors rushed to buy stock. The flurry caused the stock of Nestor Inc., which sells automated traffic enforcement systems to local governments and trades under the ticket symbol NEST, to surge 1,900 percent. Prior to the deal, Nestor was trading for less than a penny. After reaching as much as 10 cents, the price fell back to 3 cents. (*Business Insider*)

COALS TO NEWCASTLE

Thanks to a new restaurant in Shanghai, Americans living in the Chinese city of 24 million people can enjoy previously unavailable ethnic cuisine: Chinese food. That is, Chinese food as served in the United States.

Fortune Cookie is the brainchild of American entrepreneurs Fung Lam, 31, who grew up in New Jersey, and David Rossi, whom Lam met in a master's program in hospitality management at Cornell University. The restaurant targets nostalgic Americans by offering General Tso's chicken and other Chinese-American dishes, made with such staples as Skippy peanut butter, Mott's applesauce, Heinz ketchup and Philadelphia cream cheese. "A lot of people called us crazy and were banking on us closing after six months," Lam says, noting that February marked the restaurant's eighth month. "It's kind of embarrassing that you're in China eating American-Chinese food, but it was spot on," customer Megan Emery-Moore, who teaches art at Shanghai American School, said, noting the food makes her feel "calm," "relaxed" and "like I'm at home." (*NPR*)

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Thomas J. Donahue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, declared that the United States needs more low-skill immigrants because U.S. workers aren't "qualified" or "willing" to do such jobs. (*The Weekly Standard*)

Compiled from mainstream news sources by Roland Sweet. Authentication on demand.

>> COMICS CONT. FROM P. 17

but people like Kamala, she says, "inherit it at birth."

From the opening moments of *Ms. Marvel* #1, with art by Adrian Alphona, colors by Ian Herring, and lettering by Joe Caramagna, we see the conflicts Kamala struggles with. "I just want to smell it," she says as she gazes longingly at a B.L.T. "Delicious, delicious infidel meat ..."

"She's very much growing into herself," Wilson explained. And while much of her story reflects what Wilson called the "universality of the teenage experience," Kamala is also "trying to straddle those two conflicting sets of demands. Her journey is about coming to grips with the fact that you can't please everyone all of the time, and that you shouldn't have to."

This internal conflict is highlighted in a lovely scene in which Kamala, having snuck out of her house only to be deeply disappointed by the party she thought she wanted to attend, has a mystical encounter with figures in the guise of Iron Man, Captain America and

Captain Marvel.

"Zoe thought that because I snuck out, it was okay for her to make fun of my family," Kamala says. "Like, Kamala's finally seen the light and kicked the dumb inferior brown people and their rules to the curb. But that's not why I snuck out! It's not that I think Ammi and Abu are dumb, it's just—I grew up here! I'm from Jersey City, not Karachi! I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I don't know who I'm supposed to be."

Before the scene can bog down in Kamala's angst, Wilson lightens the mood with an unexpected joke about the original *Ms. Marvel*'s "classic, politically incorrect costume."

It's a masterful sequence—well supported by Alphona's art—that establishes Kamala as a three-dimensional character, with conflicting desires and a sharp need to understand just who she is. As such, she is likely to appeal to a wide swath of comics readers, but perhaps especially those who are seeking more diverse heroes. Wilson, citing changing demographics in comics fandom, credits Marvel for recognizing the need for changes on the pages of

comic books. "They're making room at the table for as many voices as possible. Readers are looking for authentic representations of their own experiences and the experiences of others." Given Wilson's well-established gifts as a storyteller, I'm confident the adventures of the new *Ms. Marvel* will always be engaging. I hope the book finds its audience and Kamala becomes a star of the Marvel universe. **IV**

Born colorblind and therefore convinced he'd never enjoy graphic forms of storytelling, Rob Cline was first bitten by the comics bug in college. The resulting virus lay dormant for many years before it was activated by the inscrutable work of Grant Morrison. Now Cline seeks out the good and bad across the comics landscape as the Colorblind Comics Critic.

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SURF ZOMBIES

It's a...THING!

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The Surf Zombies are back with their fourth album, *It's A... THING!*, which marks the second album featuring their current band lineup: Founding member Brook Hoover is on guitar along with Ian Williams from the Wheelers and the Blendours, also on guitar. There is also Tyler Russell on drums and Trevor Treiber from the Blendours on bass, replacing Joel McDowell.

On the new album, a few of the song titles vaguely refer to surfing—"Marian Beach," "Sewer Surfing" and "Locals Only" (a sign that's posted around popular surf beaches). The rest of the songs focus on the tangentially-related subcultures of skateboarding, hot rods, science fiction, comic books and horror. But, aside from the tongue-in-cheek nature of the song titles, what we have is another solid slab of sinewy guitars evoking images of busting surfboards, wipeouts and pipelines on a distant glistening beach.

Since the band's lineup still includes Williams who was very involved in mixing both this album and the band's 2012 release *Lust for Rust*, it isn't surprising that the two albums have a similar sound and attitude. The addition of the latest members of Surf Zombies have put welcome punk and psychedelic flourishes into the classic surf rock sound.

My favorite track on *It's A... THING!* is the Hoover-penned "Tophat" which takes a Beach Boys-influenced guitar and bass line and mixes it with some over-the-top Jefferson Airplane psychedelic distortion. Hoover told me that the song is "supposed to be kinda trippy. Like background music for a low budget '60s biker film."

The Surf Zombies may not come from a place where surfing is a pastime, but they have the passion, spirit and dedication of surfers in spades.

—Mike Roeder



MATTHEW DAVIS

Let's Drown Each Other



SERGIO LEONE

"Funeral Hits"

thisaintheheavenrc.bandcamp.com

When Matthew Davis died in his sleep of an aneurysm in 2003, the loss to Iowa City was larger than the death of one man. His band Ten Grand—so named because, as rumor has it, a more affluent musical group paid them an undisclosed amount to give up their former name Vidablue—was on the verge of becoming a big thing outside our small pond after triumphant tours of the U.S. and Europe. Known for the depth of their songwriting and the overwhelming intensity of their live performances,

Davis' death left a hole that hasn't been filled.

Davis wasn't just a singer in a band: He was a musician for whom musical creation was a relentless obsession. His brother Dan Davis has recently released these two EPs of Davis' solo work on Bandcamp, the proceeds of which will go towards pressing a double vinyl album of his solo work to be released next fall.

Let's Drown Each Other collects some demos Davis recorded in his basement, presumably intended for eventual full band arrangements. These are songs of bereft heartbreak, made clear by the song titles: "You Broke Everything I Own," "How Can I Breathe When You're Here?" and "Shut Up When I'm Talking to You." The epic miserableness of the lyrics is leavened by the meditative beauty of the songs; even in the midst of dark emotion the music hints at a way out. His voice, usually heard swooping and howling in a sea of noise at a Ten Grand show, is as delicate and damaged as Neil Young's. Every crack, waver and note not quite reached is in service of the song's meaning. His strummed guitar playing is only simple on the surface. His alternate tunings build an original set of chord voicings for each song.

Funeral Hits is from Davis and Molly Freeman's experimental ambient project, Sergio Leone. Found sounds recorded from television and other unidentifiable sources weave in and out of a bricolage of fragmented movie soundtrack music and Davis' Enosque guitar and keyboard landscapes. The morbid album name contrasts with absurd song titles like "Dick Tracy vs. Flattop" and "Your Mom Is A Broken Record."

The world hardly needs another album like *Funeral Hits*, either in 2002 or now. Thousands of people perform this kind of experiment, and, as it is in scientific research, the results are mostly negative. But very few experimenters have Davis' lush musical imagination. Embedded in the sonic masala of Sergio Leone are delicate, finely-worked song fragments that Davis pulled out of the air to fit the cut and paste ambience. When someone dies, their transgressions, disappointments and petty infractions fade in people's memory. Their accomplishments are magnified and polished. Matt Davis needs no such elegiac nostalgia to burnish his reputation. The music he created was original, emotional and as fresh now as when he first made it. **IV**

—Kent Williams



ARIES (March 21-April 19): Are you between jobs? Between romantic partners? Between secure foundations and clear mandates and reasons to get up each morning? Probably at least one of the above. Foggy whirlwinds may be your intimate companions. Being up-in-the-air could be your customary vantage point. During your stay in this weird vacationland, please abstain from making conclusions about its implications for your value as a human being. Remember these words from author Terry Braverman: "It is important to detach our sense of self-worth from transitional circumstances, and maintain perspective on who we are by enhancing our sense of 'self-mirth.'" Whimsy and levity can be your salvation, Aries. Lucky flux should be your mantra.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The renowned cellist Yo Yo Ma once came to the home of computer pioneer Steve Jobs and performed a private concert. Jobs was deeply touched, and told Ma, "Your playing is the best argument I've ever heard for the existence of God, because I don't really believe a human alone can do this." Judging from the current astrological omens, Taurus, I'm guessing you will soon experience an equivalent phenomenon: a transcendent expression of love or beauty that moves you to suspect that magic is afoot. Even if you are an atheist, you are likely to feel the primal shiver that comes from having a close brush with enchantment.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In my dream, I was leading a pep rally for a stadium full of Geminis. "Your intensity brings you great pleasure," I told them over the public address system. "You seek the company of people who love you to be inspired. You must be appreciated for your enthusiasm, never shamed. Your drive for excellence doesn't stress you out, it relaxes you. I hereby give you license to laugh even louder and sing even stronger and think even smarter." By now the crowd was cheering and I was bellowing. "It's not cool to be cool," I exulted. "It's cool to be burning with a white-hot lust for life. You are rising to the next octave. You are playing harder than you have ever played."



CANCER (June 21-July 22): "My old paintings no longer interest me," said the prolific artist Pablo Picasso when he was 79 years old. "I'm much more curious about those I haven't done yet." I realize it might be controversial for me to suggest that you adopt a similar perspective, Cancerian. After all, you are renowned for being a connoisseur of old stories and past glories. One of your specialties is to keep memories alive and vibrant by feeding them with your generous love. To be clear, I don't mean that you should apologize for or repress those aptitudes. But for now—say, the next three weeks—I invite you to turn your attention toward the exciting things you haven't done yet.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): I recommend that you sleep with a special someone whose dreams you'd like to blend with yours. And when I say "sleep with," I mean it literally; it's not a euphemism for "having sex with." To be clear: Making love with this person is fine if that's what you both want. But my main point is that you will draw unexpected benefits from lying next to this companion as you both wander through the dreamtime. Being in your altered states together will give you inspiration you can't get any other way. You won't be sharing information on a conscious level, but that's exactly the purpose: to be transformed together by what's flowing back and forth between your deeper minds. For extra credit, collaborate on incubating a dream. Read this: tinyurl.com/dreamincubation.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "One chord is fine," said rock musician Lou Reed about his no-frills approach to writing songs. "Two chords are pushing it. Three chords and you're into jazz." I recommend his perspective to you in the coming weeks, Virgo. Your detail-oriented appreciation of life's complexity is one of your finest qualities, but every once in a while—like now—you can thrive by stripping down to the basics. This will be especially true about your approach to intimate relationships. For the time being, just assume that cultivating simplicity will generate the blessings you need most.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You Librans haven't received enough gifts, goodies and compliments lately. For reasons I can't discern, you have been deprived of your rightful share. It's not fair! What can you do to rectify this imbalance in the cosmic ledger? How can you enhance your ability to attract the treats you deserve? It's important that we solve this riddle, since you are entering a phase when your wants and needs will expand and deepen. Here's what I can offer: I hereby authorize you to do whatever it takes to entice everyone into showering you with bounties, boons and bonuses. To jumpstart this process, shower yourself with bounties, boons and bonuses.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "The art of living is more like wrestling than dancing," wrote the Roman philosopher Marcus Aurelius more than 1,800 years ago. Is that true for you, Scorpio? Do you experience more strenuous struggle and grunting exertion than frisky exuberance? Even if that's usually the case, I'm guessing that in the coming weeks your default mode should be more akin to dancing than wrestling. The cosmos has decided to grant you a grace period—on one condition, that is: You must agree to experiment more freely and have more fun that you normally allow yourself.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): For the itch you are experiencing, neither chamomile nor aloe vera will bring you relief. Nor would over-the-counter medications like calamine lotion. No, Sagittarius. Your itch isn't caused by something as tangible as a rash or hives, and can't be soothed by any obvious healing agent. It is, shall we say, more in the realm of a soul itch—a prickly tickle that is hard to diagnose, let alone treat. I'm guessing that there may be just one effective cure: Become as still and quiet and empty as you possibly can, and then invite your Future Self to scratch it for you.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The world is awash in bright, shiny nonsense. Every day we wade through a glare of misinformation and lazy delusions and irrelevant data. It can be hard to locate the few specific insights and ideas that are actually useful and stimulating. That's the bad news, Capricorn. Here's the good news: You now have an enhanced ability to ferret out nuggets of data that can actually empower you. You are a magnet for the invigorating truths you really need most.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): If you come up with an original invention, apply for a patent immediately. If you think of a bright idea, put it to work as soon as possible. If you figure out crucial clues that everyone else seems blind to, dispel the general ignorance as quickly as you can. This is a perfect moment for radical pragmatism carried out with expeditious savvy. It's not a time when you should naively hope for the best with dreamy nonchalance. For the sake of your mental health and for the good of your extended family, be crisp, direct, and forceful.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In the 1997 film *Austin Powers, International Man of Mystery*, the lead character announces that "'Danger' is my middle name." Ever since, real people in the UK have been legally making "Danger" their middle name with surprising regularity. I think it would be smart fun for you Pisceans to add an innovative element to your identity in the coming days, maybe even a new middle name. But I recommend that you go in a different direction than "Danger." A more suitable name might be "Changer," to indicate you're ready to eagerly embrace change. Or how about "Ranger," to express a heightened desire to rove and gallivant?

HOMEWORK: What were the circumstances in which you were most dangerously alive?

—Rob Breznsky

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